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The Short Story:

SOME CLINICAL NOTES ON THE SHORT STORY
By Harry Shaw

LITTLE STORY, WHAT NOW?
By Bonaro Overstreet

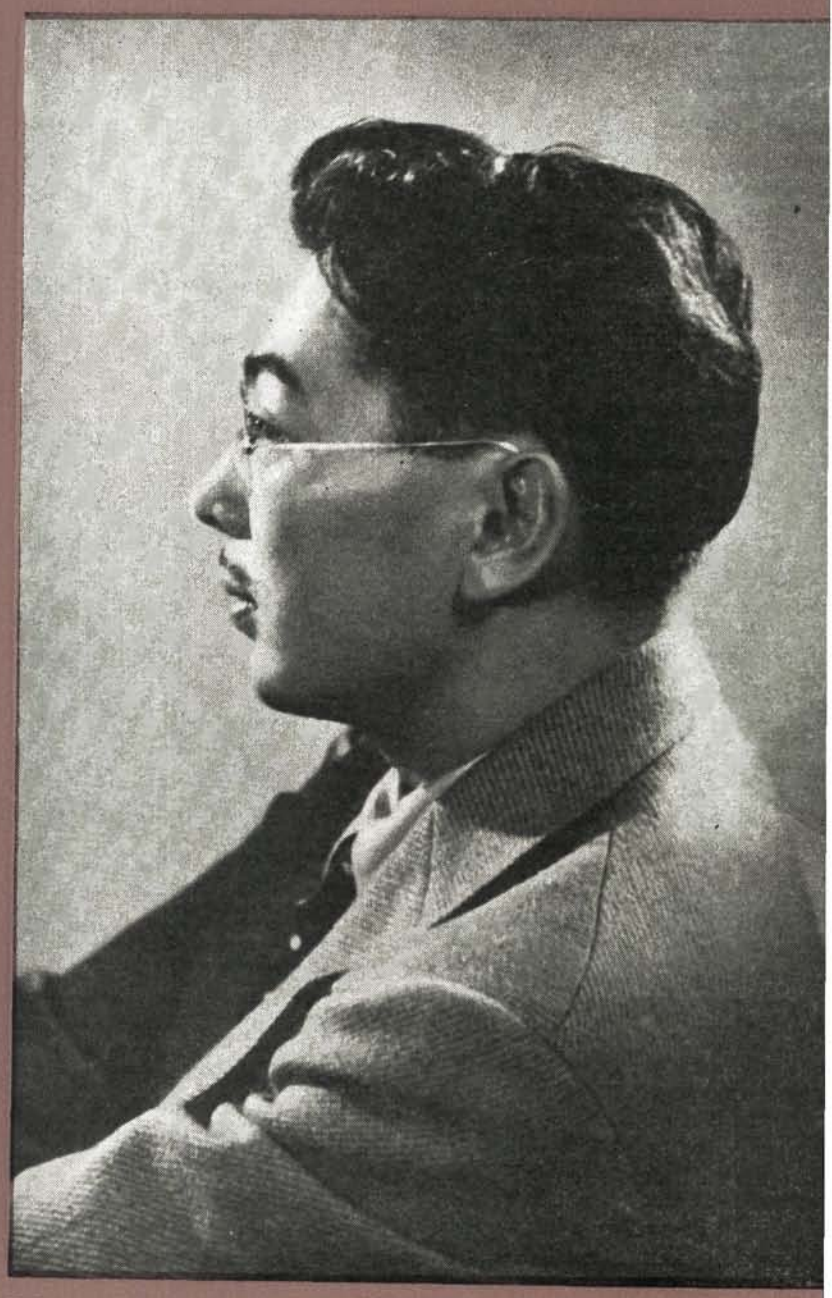
THE DETECTIVE SHORT STORY
By Ellery Queen

"A SUB-TREASURY OF AMERICAN HUMOR"
Edited by E. B. White and K. S. White
Reviewed by Leonard Bacon

"O. HENRY MEMORIAL STORIES, 1941"
Edited by Herschel Brickell
Reviewed by Gorham Munson

"STORM"
By George Stewart
Reviewed by Paul B. Sears

"SARATOGA TRUNK"
By Edna Ferber
Reviewed by Fairfax Downey



S. I. HAYAKAWA (author of "Language in Action") "uses the new science of semantics to give the lay reader a kind of guidebook through the world of words." *(See page 11)*

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"The illusion of a symphony heard . . .

. . . rather than of a story read!"

by Barbara Tunnell Anderson

"This impressive first novel will mean a great deal to many people. It will mean a lot to those who are interested in the impact which today's world is having on the small towns of the South which are still trying to hold to their past. It will mean much to those who feel that it is time those towns make their own music and paint their own pictures, instead of leaving it to the cities. It will be especially important to those who understand that events in Europe are bound to affect the lives of people everywhere. All these themes weave themselves into this quiet but moving story of adults in a small Southern town, as seen through the eyes of a sensitive child. And in the end these themes come together and play upon each other with such ringing emphasis that one has the illusion of its being a symphony heard, rather than a story read." ---Harper's Magazine.

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The Saturday Review of Literature

The Short Story: A Balance Sheet

SOME CLINICAL NOTES

By Harry Shaw

WHAT has become of the good short stories? Fewer and fewer are appearing in the old quality and experimental periodicals; many of these magazines now carry no fiction at all. Is it time for the long-mourned personal essay to move over and make room for another obsolescent type?

Although there is a decided trend from fiction to fact, don't dig a grave for the short story, yet. The decline is largely numerical and is confined primarily to more serious magazines. Mass circulation periodicals now publish fewer stories than they did fifteen and twenty years ago, but the ratio of stories to total contents has not changed appreciably. Furthermore, the causes for decay must be traced carefully. Also, the quality and volume of the short story, and even the novel, in American publishing must be remembered: only a few of the thousands of short stories ever published in American periodicals possess literary greatness. This percentage remains about the same. In addition, the novel represents quantitatively only a small portion of the total publishing business—less than one fifth of the volumes brought out by American publishers from 1920-1940 were fiction. Even so "popular" a magazine as *The Saturday Evening Post* carried more articles than short stories in 1920, 1930, and 1940. In both book and magazine publishing, nonfiction has always bulked larger than fiction.

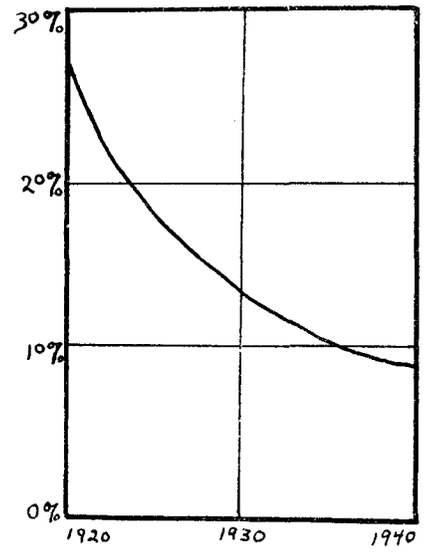
But this important fact remains: the number of stories appearing in serious magazines has been steadily declining for several years. This quantitative decline is apparent even after discounting the yeoman service contributed to the cause of the short story and story-writers by such comparatively "new" publications as *Story* and *Esquire*. These magazines, as well as one or two others, hardly suffice to fill the fictional void which is appearing in the older, long-established quality periodicals. See what the statistics reveal about editorial practices and, much more important, changing tastes in reading.

The 1941 "Yearbook of the Short Story," edited by the late E. J. O'Brien, lists 63 periodicals carrying short stories. In 1937 there were 82. In 1937, the O. Henry Memorial Award committee consulted 115 magazines; in the last edition only 92 are noted. Do these declines indicate economic ravages among periodicals generally? Hardly: only 4 per cent fewer newspapers and magazines were published in 1940 than in 1920, only 8 per cent fewer monthly periodicals. Short fiction in the quality magazines has suffered far more casualties than these percentages reveal.

Consider *Harper's Magazine*. The 61 short stories it carried in 1920 represented 42 per cent of the total editorial content. Ten years later, its 37 stories constituted 22 per cent. In 1940, only 9 per cent of the magazine was devoted to short stories, 17 in number. (True, *Harper's* did serialize two novels in 1940. But *all* fiction that year was 15 per cent of the contents as contrasted with 42 per cent devoted to short stories alone twenty years before.)

In 1930, the *American Mercury* car-

(*Continued on page* 23)



Average percentage of space allotted to the short story from 1920 to 1940 in *American Mercury*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Harper's Magazine*, *North American Review*, *Yale Review*.

LITTLE STORY, WHAT NOW?

By Bonaro Overstreet

IS it really time to weave funeral wreaths for the short story? We gather that impression from various critics who tell us, dolefully, that this well-beloved form is not what it once was. But must all things die that are not what they once were?

The short story has had a peculiar history—and in this history lies a clue to why critics pronounce elegies over it whenever it shows an unfamiliar face. Most literary types belong to the ages. The short story belongs to the nineteenth century.

The short story that bears that trade-mark is, first of all, a story with a plot—a close-knit structure that can be seen steadily and whole. In the well-constructed story of plot, of incident and coincident, things happen—and nothing happens that does not push the story along toward its climax. The skillful writer of the nineteenth century story had his materials as well in hand, as obedient to his organizing will, as had the strong man who spanned a continent with a railroad. He, too, in his own way, was a competent executive.

A respect for action and the fruits of action, however, is not an isolated phenomenon. Psychologically, it cannot be. It has to be underwritten by two basic faiths. Joined with these, action becomes an efficient means to an end. Without them, it becomes—as it became during the twenties of our own century—a frenetic means of escape from having to think about ends. These two faiths necessary to an eager respect for action permeated nineteenth-century thinking—and the nineteenth-century short story.

The first of these faiths was simply that it is possible—indeed, natural—for people to know the difference between right and wrong. The short story might have its villain—drunkard, thief, exploiter, snob, traitor, forecloser of a mortgage, or what not—but there was a clear assumption, accepted alike by author and public, that the behavior of such a villain went counter to something so fundamental in the scheme of things that

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he must repent or perish. The life of action, in fiction or out, can command respect when, and only when, the basic code of values is taken for granted—and rare indeed in the nineteenth century were stories of ethical *laissez faire*.

The second faith was that people are, for the most part, what they seem to be. They may be torn by temptations, but their struggles are aboveboard—part of their conscious, active experience. They may be afraid, but their fears attach to known causes in the objective world and can be overcome by fitting activity. They may be guilty of deceit, but scarcely of self-deceit: they know well enough what they are up to, and sooner or later they give themselves away by their conduct. Here, again, is a faith that must accompany an eager belief in action: for since men of action cannot be forever hunting out obscure motives and hidden clues, they have to assume a reliable correspondence between inner character and outward behavior. In the nineteenth century people commonly assumed such a correspondence. Story writers did likewise, and based their plots upon it.

What of the twentieth century? It is not, in the same sense as the nineteenth, marked by *eventfulness*. To say this may seem paradoxical—even absurd. For more things happen every day, every minute, than ever before. But *eventfulness* is a psychological as well as a physical matter—and the twentieth century is dog-tired of action: action that goes on because it cannot seem to stop; that is always having to go on to counterbalance other action that is likewise going on because it cannot stop.

What event, now—what physical discovery, or new mechanism—can stir the satiated, event-ridden imagination of man to visions of a brave new world? Our age-old Icarian dream took shape in the first clumsy aeroplane that lifted its wings from the earth; and within two decades the bombing plane was dumping its loads of death upon cities. If we take this as symbolic of what has happened to one after another of the machines and enterprises to which we attached our faith, we can say that the dropped bombs have ripped raw caverns not only in the streets of cities but in the hearts of men; they have reduced to rubble not only our houses but our hopes. It was a splendid thing for man to invent a plane that could conquer space. But what value is there in his inventing a plane that can merely hold its own against another death-dealing plane: hold its own, that is, until the enemy model is improved so that he will have to improve his own model to hold his own? Not by such a vicious circle as this can an eager faith in action be kept alive.

In the twentieth century, because we have lost the faiths that must underpin a confident life of action, we are being thrown back upon a study of human nature—human motives, fears, wants, prejudices. The drama of our century is the drama of what goes on in the mind. The outward action—whether it be the slightest gesture of a hand or the ruthless invasion of one nation by another—is significant only as it throws light upon the obscure mental and emotional states that have bred it.

THE characteristic science of our century is psychology. It has naturalized in our speech such words and phrases as *inferiority complex, stream of consciousness, inhibition, the subconscious, frustration, rationalization*. These are not action-words. They reflect our growing need to understand what goes on in the hidden corners of our human nature.

What of the short story in our century? Its future is as unpredictable as that of all our other institutions. But this we can say: during the past several decades it has become a more and more expert medium for the expression of our deep concern about human moods and motives—moods and motives that have shown themselves to be far less transparent than we once thought they were.

Two protests commonly made against the current short story are, first, that it specializes in the unpleasant and abnormal and, second, that it is formless—has no plot. (Thus Irvin S. Cobb, in a recent interview in the *New York Times*, spoke the mind of disgruntled critics and public alike when he said, "I couldn't do these things they publish now, with no beginning and no end and a little incest in the middle.") Both of these charges against the short story can be maintained with a show of reason. But the sober critic who cares more about understanding the new than expressing his nostalgia for the old may choose to suspend judgment—may suspect that these faults are transition-faults. The nineteenth-century story-teller was a master of plot. His twentieth-century fellow, seeing that life was not made up of neatly parcelled collections of incidents, took his rebel stand: let his stream-of-consciousness dictate his words. The nineteenth-century writer—for reasons of common faith—wrought happy endings even out of situations that seemed logically to promise little happiness. The twentieth-century writer—for reasons of common cynicism—first turned to the unhappy and abnormal. Anyone, however, who makes an unbiased approach to the short stories being written to-

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day will realize, I think, that these are no longer either formless or swaggeringly dedicated to the sordid.

The twentieth-century story-teller is becoming, in his own way, a master of rigorous form. But to understand this form, we must recognize that it is dictated by psychological materials and processes, not primarily by events in the objective world. Its logic is not, and cannot be, that of dovetailed incidents that total up to a precise plot —a plot that any teacher of English can outline on a blackboard. Its logic is the complex logic of mental and emotional experience. Associate linkages, personal memories and fears and faiths, rationalized reasons for behavior, subsurface thinking that goes on in contradiction to surface talk—all these, and a multitude of other factors, must be recognized by the writer, today, as part of the deeper logic of any given situation. In determining its outcome, they may be far more important than are objective events.

Some readers complain that nothing happens in modern stories. But we all know from our own experience that a great deal can be happening—that volcanic changes in mind and mood can take place—when there is scarcely a surface ripple for the casual observer to detect. Objective events are necessary for drama in inverse proportion to the psychological charge that a situation carries. If little is thought or felt, much must happen; if much is thought and felt, no elaborate stacking-up of incidents is necessary for dramatic catharsis through pity and fear. The pity and fear of human thinking and feeling is what dictates the strict form which the twentieth-century story is learning to impose upon itself.

As for the complaint that stories are deliberately unpleasant, I think the answer must be that they are as unpleasant as sincerity makes them—neither more nor less. When first-rate nineteenth-century writers made a clear distinction between right and wrong, and provided in their plot for the triumph of the former, they were not insincere. They were not trying to be a good influence, nor to furnish their readers with an easy avenue of escape from ugliness. The confidence they expressed in the basic rationality of life was their own sincere confidence. The happy ending became a trivial formula only when genuine faith no longer gave it solid meaning. The twentieth-century rebellion has been against formulated insincerity, against stories that went on using the spent trappings of faith after the faith had gone. Moralists who now urge that writers should be purveyors of good cheer had best recognize the dubious-

(*Continued on page 25*)

The Detective Short Story

BY ELLERY QUEEN

CONSIDERING the virulence of the literary bug and its affinity for all manner of hosts, the first century since Poe has produced a remarkably small number of books of detective short stories. One reason for this is that even detective-story writers must live, and such books do not sell. It is interesting in this connection to note the extremes of desperation to which some authors (or their publishers) have resorted to keep from their innocent patrons, in whom this prejudice against volumes of short stories generally persists, the fact that a given book *is* in truth a book of short stories. The favorite device is to disguise the book as a novel.

If the number of books of detective short stories of all types is surprisingly small, the number of those of the "pure" detection type is amazingly so. Only 247 known titles of this type exist, breaking down into three classifications: (1) 215 about male detectives like Sherlock Holmes, Father Brown, Mr. Fortune; (2) 27 about female detectives—from C. L. Pirkis's Loveday Brooke (1894), George R. Sims's Dorcas Dene (1897), and McDonnell Bodkin's Dora Myrl (1900) to the more modern Mme. Storey (1926) of Hulbert Footner, Mignon Eberhart's Susan Dare (1934), and the Coles' Mrs. Warrender (1939); and (3) 5 books of short stories about boy detectives. Four of these last concern the adventures in detection of young P. J. Davenant written by Lord Frederic Hamilton; the other is "The Adventures of Detective Barney," by Harvey O'Higgins.

This is the first photograph of "Ellery Queen" ever published. Actually, Ellery Queen is the pen name of two gentlemen, Manfred B. Lee and Frederick Dannay, both of whom are shown above in their collaborative composite.

Of the 247 volumes of stories of "pure" detection, 50 are the work of only 5 authors! These fertile scriveners are Dick Donovan (believe it or not, once an immensely popular writer—his real name was Joyce Emmerson Muddock); Gilbert K. Chesterton, who created not only Father Brown but also Horne Fisher, Mr. Pond, and Gabriel Gale; Arthur B. Reeve, creator of Craig Kennedy and Constance Dunlap; Agatha Christie; and H. C. Bailey. This leaves a mere 197 books of "pure" detective short stories written by all the rest of mankind since 1841! And many of these 197 volumes are so scarce today as to be virtually unobtainable—such oddities as Headon Hill's "Zambra the Detective" (1894); David Christie Murray's "The Investigations of John Pym" (1895); H. Frankish's "Dr. Cunliffe, Investigator" (1902); Duncan Dallas's "Paul Richards, Detective" (1908); Victor Whitechurch's "Thrilling Stories of the Railway" (1912), about Thorpe Hazell, detective; Cecil Henry Bullivant's "Garnett Bell, Detective" (*circa* 1918); Scott Campbell's paperbacks about Detective Felix Boyd; and numerous others.

To add to the labors of the research worker, many books exist whose stories are not exclusively devoted to the adventures of a single detective. In such collections of stories a tale of "pure" detection may be smothered under a haystack of straight mystery stories, or stories of crime-*sans*-detection. Such a heterogeneous volume is Anna Katharine Green's "Masterpieces of Mystery" (1913)—surely the publisher's title, which he regretted, for six years later it was reissued under the new title "Room Number 3." J. S. Fletcher is the author of many such: "The Secret of the Barbican," "The Malachite Jar," etc. Prolific as he was, Fletcher produced only one volume of stories of "pure" detection: "Paul Campenhaye: Specialist in Criminology" (1908). The books of William LeQueux often concern a single central character (as "In Secret," 1920; "Bleke the Butler," 1923; and others) but the tales are nonetheless of the mixed type —some detection, some mystery, some crime, and some out-and-out adventure.*

There are 135 titles in this "mixed-

* The sole exception is LeQueux's "Mysteries of a Great City" (1919) which are the reminiscences of M. Raoul Becq, *ex-sous-chef* of the Sûreté Générale of Paris, consistently tales of "pure" detection.

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type" group. It should be noted that this figure does not include all of E. Phillips Oppenheim's books of short stories, which alone number 38. Most of these are not properly books of detection or crime, being of the adventure-spy-international-intrigue school. Oddly enough, for all his literary virility Oppenheim has fathered few books of "pure" detection: such works as "The Hon. Algernon Knox, Detective" (1920); "Nicholas Goade, Detective" (1927); and "Slane's Long Shots" (1930) are almost lost in the crowd. But these few Oppenheim books of "pure" detection and "mixed types" are included in their proper groups.

Even more exasperating to the bibliophilous Nimrod (and, by the identical token, upon discovery more satisfying) is the occasional publication of a volume of short stories by an author distinguished in a field of writing other than detection-crime. Here the ardent explorer may be pardoned if his foot slips, for who would associate W. W. Jacobs with detective tales, or Aldous Huxley, or Ben Hecht, or W. Somerset Maugham? Yet these literary respectables are merely a few who have composed stories of detection-crime.

THE names Raffles and Arsène Lupin are so universally familiar that one would think the bound literature of crooks-in-short-stories to be a vast continent for exploration. Curiously enough, there are to the writer's knowledge a mere 35 different book titles —in one hundred years! These sing the roguish escapades of E. W. Hornung's Raffles; Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin; and Leslie Charteris's Simon Templar, alias the Saint (most of which, however, are novellas)—to mention the best-known. They also include certain lesser luminaries who nevertheless have shed a scoundrelly fame: Frederick Irving Anderson's The Infallible Godahl; Bruce Graeme's Blackshirt (is it possible the Infallible Benito owes all to Mr. Graeme?); Frank Heller's Mr. Philip Collin; Harry Stephen Keeler's DeLancey, King of Thieves; and Frank L. Packard's Jimmie Dale. And you, O student, might do worse than to investigate the assorted sculduggeries of this obscure trio: Barry Pain's Constantine Dix (1905), A. C. Fox-Davies's Sir John Kynnersley (1908), and Edgar Wallace's Anthony Newton. . . . What—have we neglected Grant Allen's Colonel Clay? Inexcusable omission! For surely you recall—if you are old enough—that engaging rapscallion. The Colonel beat Raffles to it by two years!

But come. Surely the ladies have amassed sufficient loot to merit inclusion in books of short stories? They have, and their small number is no reflection on their burglarious daring. These lovely creatures of sin are three: Mrs. Raffles (1905), who stalks through the book of short stories of that name by John Kendrick Bangs, and who never tackled a "job" for less than millions; of course, this is parody typically Bangsian. Then there is Frederick Irving Anderson's "The Notorious Sophie Lang" (1925) who lives in that single volume of stories and, more recently, has been resurrected in motion pictures. And finally Edgar Wallace's "Four Square Jane" (n.d.).

A parody is a burlesque imitating some serious work; a pastiche is usually a serious imitation in the exact manner of the original author. Only the illustrious call forth such passionate homage; and in the literature of detection who is more illustrious, as a character and a catholic institution, than Sherlock Holmes?

The parodies of Holmes far exceed the pastiches, which are rare. John Kendrick Bangs did lusty work in Sherlockian parody. Stories of this type may be found in these Bangs volumes: "The Pursuit of the Houseboat" (1897), "The Dreamers: a Club" (1899), "The Enchanted Typewriter" (1899), and "Potted Fiction" (1908). In 1903 Bangs wrote a series of Holmes parodies for newspapers which he called "The Posthumous Memoirs of Shylock Homes," never assembled between boards; and in 1906, trifling with genetics, he created Raffles Holmes, the "son" of Sherlock Holmes and the "grandson" A. J. Raffles, whose merry exploits were assembled under the title "R. Holmes & Co."

The pastiche, whose intent is serious, and the fashioning of which requires immense knowledge, discrimination, and courage, is necessarily a rare literary form. The best pastiche of Sherlock Holmes is Vincent Starrett's "The Unique Hamlet" (1920). William O. Fuller's "A Night with Sherlock Holmes" (1929) also merits your respectful attention. Both were privately printed and, in first edition, are aggravatingly scarce.

Between 1856 and 1890 detective-crime literature suffered an epidemic of "realism." People became interested in crimes that actually happened and detectives who existed in the usual

three-dimensional form; so a gout of books gushed forth from the presses, professing to be the memoirs of this police officer or that, many of which were fiction concocted by professional writers; and fact and fiction were so jumbled that today it is difficult to differentiate one from the other. It is hardly necessary to add that most of these "diaries," "reminiscences," "memoirs," and "revelations" of supposedly real-life policemen were purest balderdash, and consequently few of them survive; in their original paperback state they are rare.

SURVIVORS include the work of "Waters" (William Russell)—"Recollections of a Detective Police-Officer" (1856 and 1859); Charles Martel's (Thomas Delf) "The Detective's Note-Book" (1860); Lieut.-Col. H. R. Addison's "Diary of a Judge" (1860); James M'Levy's "Curiosities of Crime in Edinburgh" (1861); M. Canler's "Autobiography of a French Detective" (1863); Andrew Forrester Jr.'s "The Revelations of a Private Detective" (1863); James M'Govan's "Brought to Bay" (1878); William Henderson's "Clues, Or Leaves from a Chief Constable's Note Book" (1889); Inspector Maurice Moser's "Stories from Scotland Yard" (1890, in collaboration with Charles F. Rideal); and E. M. Leader Sturt's "A Detective's Memoirs" (n.d.).

The writer knows of 40 different titles in this group, although at the present writing, and after continuous bloodhound trailing, he possesses copies of only 20.*

You are not to confuse the above-mentioned group with Allan Pinkerton's legitimate memoirs in "Thirty Years a Detective" and Arthur Train's (creator of Mr. Tutt) in "True Stories of Crime," among many others, including the famous Major Arthur Griffiths's "Mysteries of Police and Crime." These are the true constellations, and do not come within our orbit, which is thick with the planetary bodies of fiction.

It goes without saying that where joy is truly precious, it begs to be communicated; and so it is not wonderful that detective-story anthologies should spring up and multiply like unregimented rabbits. The number of anthologies is relatively high—97 known volumes, and 4 others are even now in the process of generation.

The earliest legitimate anthology

* Exclusive of "pseudo-real life" books, the Ellery Queen library of detective-crime short story volumes is at this writing 90 per cent complete. But for research purposes connected with the present anthology we had access to most of the volumes missing from the Queen collection, thanks chiefly to E. T. (Ned) Guymon, Jr. of San Diego, California, who possesses the largest library of mystery fiction (in total number of volumes) in the world.

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was published by Chapman & Hall in London in 1895. It was called "The Long Arm & Other Detective Stories"; Mary E. Wilkins (Freeman) contributed "The Long Arm" and George Ira Brett (later known as Oswald Crawford), Roy Tellet, and Professor Brander Matthews contributed the "Others." This pioneer work was followed (*circa* 1897) by the paperback "Diprose's Annuals," which technically are anthologies because they contain some mystery-crime short stories by a variety of authors. The first American anthology did not appear until 1906: Vol. I (called "Detective Stories") in the 3-volume set entitled "Great Short Stories," edited by William Patten. Perhaps the first specialized anthology was "Twenty-Five Tales of the Railway" (Newnes, *circa* 1912), stories of crime, adventure, and detectives, but all on railway themes. A great many of the 97 known anthologies were published in England only; because of existing conditions they are nearly impossible to procure.

It is not remarkable that detective-story writers themselves should be prominent among the anthologists. For one thing, the writer in this field who has made his mark is generally infected with a pride of profession which erupts, like measles, in little pustulary desires to build a better anthology—"a truly *definitive* job, you know!"—than anyone living or dead. For another, it is the only certain method of immortalizing one of one's own stories. At any rate, we have had numerous professional anthologists, among them Carolyn Wells, S. S. Van Dine, Vincent Starrett, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ronald A. Knox (with H. Harrington), Dashiell Hammett (more strictly a supernatural anthology), E. C. Bentley, Raymond Postgate, and John Rhode.

The value of the anthology to both student and lay reader is threefold: (*a*) It often contains short stories which never saw book publication and are taken directly from periodicals and original manuscripts. (*b*) It keeps alive the best work of the older authors, whose books have been long out of print and would not therefore be available to present-day readers. (It can be said with exact truth that characters like The Old Man in the Corner and Eugène Valmont owe their continued existence wholly to anthologists). And (*c*) it memorializes the best stories of modern authors.

So there are the statistics of the First Hundred Years of the detective-crime short story.

This article is drawn from the Introduction of Ellery Queen's new anthology, "101 Years' Entertainment," published this week by Little, Brown & Co.

How to Break a Rib

A SUB-TREASURY OF AMERICAN HUMOR. Edited by E. B. White and K. S. White. New York: Coward-McCann. 1941. 804 *pp., index.* $3.

Reviewed by LEONARD BACON

IT does not seem to matter much to what Mr. E. B. White sets his hand. It's bound to be good. And this goes for his delightful anthology. His whole remarkable equipment of common sense and uncommon fancy has gone into the preparation of a charming book. Not only was he perfectly qualified for the task himself but he had the further advantage of having married Mrs. White, whose hand is by no means invisible in a work which is certain to give a great deal of pleasure to a great many people.

All such books are to be judged by what they include and what they omit. But after roving with much amusement through eight-hundred diverting pages, the reviewer has arrived at the conclusion that there is practically nothing that doesn't belong.

It's not much use to give an account of a preface at Mr. White's subacid best, full of mirth and observation, both of which have high penetrating power. Read it yourself and, as the poet said, learn something for a change. This man is worth listening to, and it's practically all gospel truth. The only thing that Mr. White seems to be incapable of is a platitude, even a very little one. And his too brief remarks on the sections into which the work is divided, Stories, Fables, Satire, Nonsense, the Critic, the Reporter, etc., are quite worth any steady consideration you may happen to have about you. In fact, Mr. White is so good that he has got away with what is ordinarily an editorial crime. He has included several of his own master works. Of this he speaks in his preface, calling it an unsavory episode. No one else will.

The reviewer's follies are not unknown, but he is not enough of an ass to endeavor to delimit the properties of humor. Humor is as indefinable as Space or Time and not unlike them. It is intrinsic, like them, in thoughts and things and is ignored at their peril by the unfortunate who overlook it. It turns up anywhere, not infrequently in the hour of death and on the day of judgment. It is, to be sure, in Aristophanes, but it's in Aeschylus too. No great tragedy, it has been noticed, was ever written by a man who lacked it. For that matter it is a necessary element in all great art whatever. Gold, to twist a familiar metaphor, is too soft without the invaluable and essential alloy, which is a protection against the friction of time.

Their book is agreeable for the two famous old reasons. One sees with pleasure what one knew and with equal pleasure what one didn't. The reviewer had never happened on Poe's appalling vivisection of William Ellery Channing the Second, in its way as comic and dreadful as Macaulay's anatomical exploration of the quivering Robert Montgomery, but hardly more brilliant than Miss Dorothy Parker's first steps in Sadism on the body of

The Whites at an editorial conference.

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the late Countess of Oxford. It is delightful to find that the remarkable modern reporters are here in real glory. Wolcott Gibbs's masterpiece on the lord of *Time* and *Fortune,* Alva Johnson flaming with intelligence, mirth, and strange sympathy on the author of Tarzan, Kelway and Liebling on Father Divine, "God's image cut in ebony." These works are magnificent in a big way and real exemplifications of the quality which we cannot and dare not define. But so is practically everything else in the book, whether it be Artemus Ward, Mark Twain, and Joel Chandler Harris, or their children, by no means degenerate, like James Thurber, Ogden Nash, and Mr. White himself.

It may be only that softness which Miss Parker complains makes men forget women (it also makes women forget men), but I do wish Mr. White hadn't altogether ignored Charles Godfrey Leland, who has been left "Afay in de Ewigkeit." Hans Breitmann may date, but there are moments. And another mild stricture occurs to an idolator. The book leans to the metropolitan. There is one humor of the city and another of the countryside. And though as one of the humorists remarks city fish may be smarter than country fish, there is now and then a trout among these last. It's so long since I have read in Rowland Robinson of Vermont that memory may play me false. Perhaps he is justly excluded. Nevertheless I hanker for something that has more of the soil and less of the pavement. Doubtless Mr. White knows stuff that comes up to this specification. I don't mean the mere rustic anecdote, which he has properly eschewed. All I want is a little more of something in the Doric style to set off the splendid modern Corinthian, "sunthin (authentically) pastoral." If it's the real article, Mr. White and Mrs. White will know it better than any one else. This book proves it.

[*Editor's Note: The introduction to "A Sub-Treasury of American Humor" is written by E. B. White, and not by both Mr. and Mrs. White, as was indicated in the SRL Preview of the book in our Fall Books Number.*]

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 399)

MARK TWAIN:
TO CORRESPONDENTS

Yes, Agassiz does recommend authors to eat fish because phosphorus makes brains. . . . If the specimen composition you sent is about your . . . average, I should judge that perhaps a couple of whales would be all you want for the present.

Hecht's "Manhattan Montage"

1001 AFTERNOONS IN NEW YORK. By Ben Hecht. New York: The Viking Press. 1941. 370 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by LEONARD LYONS

IT cost Ben Hecht more than $100,000 to write "1001 Afternoons In New York." He does not consider that a staggering sacrifice, nor at all significant. "It's fun writing what I please," he once explained, "without having Sam Goldwyn peering over my shoulder."

Sheer caprice almost stayed Hecht's hand from stemming the goldwaters which came streaming to him from Hollywood. Seven thousand dollars a week, which would have made him the highest paid writer of our time, was the sum offered for his exclusive services by the MGM studios. But before the signatories were to place their respective seals upon the contract of employment, the party of the second part—Mr. L. B. Mayer—insisted upon a remarkable condition-precedent. The movie producer asked that Ben first apologize for a privately distributed poem he had written about Mr. Mayer three years earlier.

"I would have apologized, if I had no money," Hecht confessed. "But—I have money."

He returned to Manhattan where, armed with the most gifted talent which ever dazzled a newspaper copy-reader, together with a write-anything-you-want-to-dispensation from the editors of *PM,* he began to release a series of daily columns about New York. The best of these—86 in number—illustrated by his distinguished friend, George Grosz, now have been collected in his new book, "1001 Afternoons In New York."

Hecht no longer writes that column. And no longer are his Manhattan colleagues confounded by the streets he chose to walk, the places he elected to scour, and the stories for which he sought in his unique coverage of the town. For there were many days on which he was as rich in fullfillment, here, as he was when the late Henry Justin Smith set him loose in the streets of Chicago, to be "the lens throwing the city life into new colors."

—*Illustration by Grosz from the book.*

Bums and Beggars have the best of Hecht, in a dozen of his selected columns. From the smoke-drinking Bowery sluts to the mendicant who paid for a stranger's college education, the author has dressed them all in the abundant colorful phrases which he seems to invoke so easily. Even the Morgue, and a Psychiatric Ward—which he calls Club 118—are closer to his heart and typewriter than the Broadway of which he is inescapably part.

Another dozen columns are devoted to his appraisals of oppressors in all places—Hitler, Darlan, and the vandals in a Washington Heights synagogue. In free verse and ringing adjectives, he adds an intellectual's eloquence to the common cry of free men. The remainder of the collection includes a variety of subjects, ranging from a parrot in Acapulco to the Poet Out of Yesterday that is Maxwell Bodenheim. Of these Hecht has built his Manhattan montage.

As discourses reflecting the varying moods of a talented writer in a great city, they deserve the permanence of book-binding. While the rest of us merely push into print the short-lived anecdotes and news-events of each day, Ben Hecht stamps his output with timelessness and with that strange rhythm of words which he alone beats out. We write for the day. He writes for the years.

But as a portrait of New York, there is one—perhaps quibbling, perhaps minor—omission. In his inaugural *PM* column, Hecht declared that he would not include the night clubs in his coverage of New York. Save for a single, contemptuous chapter called "Evening in Ermine," in which he declared "you can't expect the already overbusy journalistic trainbearers to roam the night willy-nilly looking for celebrities," no reference is made to the night club sector of Manhattan. As one whose chore it is to roam the night—not willy-nilly, but in a definite, prearranged route which takes me, before the morning sun has risen to end my day, to at least a dozen clubs, at the hours when each is expected to have its fullest complement of news-making customers—I register Exception. For no zealous historian can afford to turn his eyes from so rich a source of exploration.

Leonard Lyons's daily column on Broadway, "The Lyons Den," is a nationally syndicated newspaper feature.

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The O. Henry Stories

O. HENRY MEMORIAL AWARD PRIZE STORIES OF 1941. Edited by Herschel Brickell. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1941. 330 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GORHAM MUNSON

EXPERTNESS is the single quality shared by all the twenty stories assembled in this year's O. Henry Memorial Award collection. The blended impression this volume makes is not "vitality" or "discovery" or "struggle to say something" or "rebellion" but simply technical excellence. The American short story appears to have completed an experimental arc traceable in Edward J. O'Brien's collection of "Fifty Best American Short Stories, 1914-1939" and to have levelled off for a flight of sustained finished craftsmanship in the "new" patterns.

I am describing a state of health in our short story but not a state of strength. This is evidently not a year when one story is so good that it blots out the rest or when a new writer bursting with talent and promise makes us urge our friends to read him right away. This is not to say that there are not memorable stories among Mr. Brickell's choices, assisted by Edith Mirrielies, Blanche Colton Williams, and Harry Hansen, who acted with the editor in making the four prize awards. Walter Van Tilburg Clark's 'Hook" is one such, a breathtaking biography of a hawk from the time it is pushed from the nest through its great days of wild fighting and fierce loving to its heroic death, after being crippled by gunshot, in unequal combat with a dog. This reviewer as a rule hates fiction about animals, but he will read Mr. Clark wherever he can come upon him.

Another memorable story is "The Old People," by William Faulkner, the best prose of the collection, remarkable for its character, the negroid Indian, Sam Fathers, and for its "magic." This story, Paul Gallico, whose "Snow Goose" is included, ought to pore over with eyes of envy, for it is "magic" that "The Snow Goose" lacks. Both writers soar toward the rare quality of myth. Faulkner attains the precious essence; Gallico destroys it just when it is within his reach by vulgar explicitness and cheap imagination, at the end of his "miracle" at Dunkirk.

In his friendly introduction, Mr. Brickell recounts the differences of opinion among the judges, and thus stimulates the reader to make it a free-for-all debate on the merits of the prizewinners. Applying the simple test of the vividness with which a story stays in memory—a test that after all is a criterion upheld by Coleridge—I do not find three of the four prize-winning stories nearly so well lodged in mind as the stories by Clark and Faulkner I have mentioned, nor do they come up, in my judgment, to the following: Sally Benson's "Retreat," David Cornel DeJong's "Seven Boys Take a Hill," Nancy Hale's "Those Are as Brothers," and Albert Maltz's "Afternoon in the Jungle." The last is the outstanding naturalistic story in the volume; the singularly bitter struggle it depicts between a boy yearning for sweets and a destitute man to recover a fifty-cent piece that has fallen through a subway grille cuts deep below "class-struggle" fiction to the theme Balzac urged upon writers, the theme of money in modern society.

The most original notes are struck by Eudora Welty, who wins the second prize, and by Edita Morris. But a mere listing of one's personal preferences in reading an anthology is not very interesting, and space is lacking to justify them. I have mentioned eight stories much to my taste, and I could run the list to ten, which simply says that for me this is a well-edited anthology. I am sure that many others, rating the stories quite differently, will nevertheless reach the same conclusion and feel grateful for Mr. Brickell's catholicity of taste and love of clean craftsmanship.

Herschel Brickell

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

FAMOUS PARODIES

Here are ten well-known parodies of famous poems. Can you recall the original poems, as well as the poets, that were their inspiration? Allowing 10 points for each correct answer, a score of 60 is par, 80 excellent. Answers on page 26.

1. The day is done, and darkness
   From the wing of night is loosed,
   As a feather is wafted downward
   From a chicken going to roost.

2. "You are old, Father William," the young man said,
   "And your hair has become very white;
   And yet you incessantly stand on your head—
   Do you think, at your age, it is right?"

3. Poor Lucy Lake was overgrown,
   But somewhat underbrained.
   She did not know enough, I own,
   To go in when it rained.
   Yet Lucy was constrained to go;
   Green bedding,—you infer.
   Few people knew she died, but oh,
   The difference to her!

4. Seated one day on an organ,
   A monkey was ill at ease,
   When his fingers wandered idly
   In search of the busy fleas.

5. God, whom we see not, is: and God, who is not, we see;
   Fiddle, we know, is diddle: and diddle, we take it, is dee.

6. "Oh! don't you go up in such a chocking night,
   Come sleep on my lap," said a maiden bright.
   On his Roman nose a tear drop come,
   But still he remarked as he upward clomb,
   "Higher!"

7. I never bought a young gazelle
   To glad me with its soft black eye
   But, when it came to know me well,
   'Twas sure to butt me on the sly.

8. Not a laugh was heard, not a frivolous note
   As the groom to the wedding we carried;
   Not a jester discharged his farewell shot
   As the bachelor went to be married.

9. I'll to Afric, lion-haunted, where the giant forest yields
   Rarer robes and finer tissue than are sold at Spitalfield's . . .
   There the passions, cramped no longer, shall have space to breathe, my cousin!
   I will wed some savage woman—nay, I'll wed at least a dozen.

10. Three brightest blessings of this thirsty race.
    (Whence sprung and when I don't propose to trace);
    Pale brandy, potent spirit of the night,
    Brisk soda, welcome when the morn is bright;
    To make the third, combine the other two.
    The force of nature can no further go.

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Two Southerners

A CURTAIN OF GREEN. By Eudora Welty. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1941. 286 *pp.* $2.50.

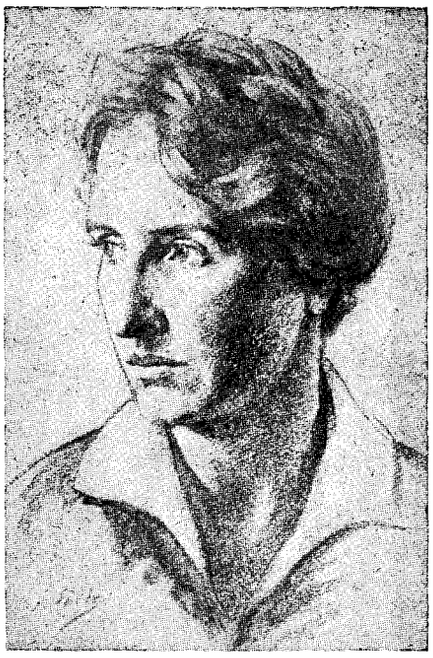
NOT BY STRANGE GODS. By Elizabeth Madox Roberts. New York: The Viking Press. 1941. 244 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by GLADYS GRAHAM BATES

THESE two interesting collections of short stories have three things in common: they are both the work of Southern women, both authors are primarily interested in the play of incident or relationship upon personality, and in each there is an intense preoccupation with the technique of presenting character from a precisely delimited angle. One of the major differences between the two authors is in the selection of subject matter. Miss Roberts takes by preference what might be called a usual person or situation and then portrays it for us sharpened and made strange by the implications and overtones she finds in it, and by the symbolic threat or promise which she superimposes. Miss Welty turns instinctively, it seems, to the odd, grotesque, or sardonic. It is encouraging to find a young writer eschewing the first personal introspective and turning to the world around her for people and for plot.

Seventeen short stories make up Eudora Welty's "A Curtain of Green," all with a small Mississippi town for setting. The first story shows the author at her typical best. Lillie Daw is a half-wit girl who has been free to roam about unquestioned, but suddenly the strong forces of respectability take a hand in Lillie's fate. She is assigned to a reform school and the Ladies' Committee visits the girl and works upon her vague understanding through cupidity. She consents to go for a bribe, giving up her half-formed dreams of marrying the little man in the travelling show who played the xylophone. The ending surprises the Ladies. Trying to tell what the stories are about gives a false impression because it is Miss Welty's manner of treating her material that makes her work distinctive and, in most cases, engrossing. In this first collection she establishes herself as a writer with something definite to say and with the ability to say it. All of the stories are not equally successful, of course, but she is an author who is bound to take her place with the best in the short story field,—and quite aside from it's "promise," that bane of all first books, this collection is new and refreshing in itself.

There are only sketches in Elizabeth Madox Roberts's "Not By Strange Gods," and in each the author takes



Elizabeth Madox Roberts

her deliberate time in setting out her theme. Each word and phrase seems to have been weighed for tone and quality before it has been set down. Whether she is writing about the defiling of a lovely and stately home by the lambing herd of a man whose eye is always on that little piece of land beyond which he wants to make his, or of the boy who, drawn into the fringes of his small town's evil, goes through such agony by reason of his very innocence of the world's ways, or of the girl who must run away from herself and love before she can accept life, Miss Roberts invests all her stories with an almost mystical significance. It is as if in each case she took some text, not given to the reader, and wrote her tale slowly and reverently around it.

Some readers will find Miss Welty too preoccupied with the eccentric and unfortunate, will feel that Miss Roberts moves too obscurely to her ends, but however personal tastes may run few will disagree with the judgment that both these volumes have a high quality of individual beauty and a deep concern with how man makes his attempted peace with the world.

The "Comic" Magazines

The comics account for seventy-five per cent of the leisure-time reading of children from 9 to 14, according to George J. Hecht, head of *Parents Magazine*. About 125 different comic magazines appear on at least 100,000 newsstands throughout the country, and approximately 15,000,000 are sold a month, which mounts up to 180,000,000 a year. The average sale of a children's book is 5,000 copies.

For Men Only

NEW STORIES FOR MEN. Edited by Charles Grayson. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1941. 644 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

SOME seasons ago Mr. Charles Grayson enlisted in Mr. Thurber's war between Men and Women with the editing of a collection called "Stories for Men," which turned out to be one of the better anthologies. He has followed it with another, containing a round three dozen tales, chosen on the principal that "a story should be something you enjoy reading." With one exception, Mr. Grayson has not included the work of any authors represented in his previous book, but he has a varied and distinguished group of names, from Irvin Cobb and Charles E. Van Loan for the old guard to Irwin Shaw and Jerome Weidman for the young entry. Sinclair Lewis is here, with a story never before published in book form; and John O'Hara, with the first installment of "Pal Joey"; and Mark Hellinger, with one of his O. Henryesque anecdotes.

That may indicate the difficulty of a reviewer's task in giving a fair idea of the contents. It may be easier to begin with a few negatives. There is no real representative of the horror story, a fairly masculine taste, the nearest approach being Irvin Cobb's sardonic tragedy, "Faith, Hope, and Charity." There are stories on the more combative and recherché sports—prize-fighting bull-fighting, cock-fighting, dog-fighting, coaching—but scarcely anything like what comes to mind when you think of a "sport story"; Irwin Shaw's "The Eighty-Yard Run" is one of the many studies of the decline of the athlete into a mortal, and James Thurber's professional ball player's reminiscence is a fantasy such as only he could write, about a baseball team that signed on a midget. And there is little or no melodrama for its own sake. There are horse and dog stories that do their tear-jerking so expertly that you don't resent it till afterward; war stories, grim or ironic; comedy that just misses the slapstick, but does miss it; some gruffly touching character studies, of the tragic flaw which breaks a man altogether, or breaks him in all but last-minute honor; and a good many others harder to classify, but every one a good job of its kind.

In fact, the book is a good job of its kind. These are in general stories that have a beginning, a middle, and an end; their action is single, entire, and of a certain magnitude; and their plot is more important than their characters.

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Do Words Scare Us?

BY FRED C. KELLY

MOST of us are incapable at times of looking at facts, because our thinking is obstructed by mere words. We mistake words for facts. We let words scare us. Many of us seem to think words are actually the same as the objects they are supposed to "stand for." If this were not true, why would thousands of radio listeners write fan letters to imaginary characters in radio dramas and even send gifts to nonexistent babies? Why should we believe candidates for office when they make campaign promises beyond anyone's power to fulfill? We accept all manner of nonsense because of our belief in word-magic. We are like the young physician in one of Molière's plays, who said "—but he can't be dead because Hippocrates says people don't die of that illness until the fourteenth day and it's now only ten days."

The reason most people would not at first believe the Wright brothers had flown was that they had previously seen or heard *words* which said that man couldn't fly. The day after the first public demonstration in the United States of a Wright flying-machine, at Fort Myer in 1908, the New York *World* referred to the machine as a "ship" and as a "vessel." The reporter doubtless was influenced by words previously printed that an airship could fly but that a heavier-than-air machine could not.

Astrologers are among those who think words are things and attribute control over human destiny to planets—because the planets are identified by names, words, for ancient mythological gods.

Another common example of the unconscious belief that words and objects are the same is the behavior of Americans when they travel in Europe and encounter a foreign language. Their own word for bread, or whatever they want, is so real to them —just as real as the thing itself— that they think the "foreigner" must surely get the idea if the word is said loudly enough.

Spoken words are merely noises people make and written words only symbols for those noises. At best, such noises and symbols do not tell *all*. A man may look at a sunset and make the noise "wonderful," or "glorious," but the noise, or word he uses cannot tell all he feels. It would take a long time and millions of words to tell all about even so simple an article as an ordinary pencil. For all about it would have to include a microscopic and sub-microscopic description. And a word never means the same thing twice, for the meaning varies according to context. *An* orange is not *this* orange; nor is the orange you saw yesterday quite the same orange today. We think we know the meaning of the word "love," but the love of a man for *this* girl cannot be the same as the love of another man for *that* girl. Much more than a word is needed to tell all. Yet we often permit ourselves to be directed into forming an opinion on a highly complicated situation without examination of facts, with nothing more than a word or two to guide us. When a piece of proposed legislation for reorganizing government departments was pending in Congress, a Chicago newspaper invariably referred to it as the "dictator bill." Whether the legislation would have worked for good or evil is beside the point. "Dictator bill" was not a complete, unbiased description of the proposal. The word "dictator" is not a dictator. But many readers behaved as if the word and the thing were identical.

Because of belief in the potency of words, many savage tribes have taboo words never to be uttered. And we who are called civilized also have our forbidden words; words so shocking to us that they are unmailable, and that if publicly spoken may cause arrest. Yet we freely may use other words commonly accepted as meaning about the same as the taboo words.

We have fighting words, too; signal words that if said to a man in a certain tone may make him murderous. But only a man who thinks words have power in themselves would permit himself to become agitated over hearing so harmless a noise.

S. I. Hayakawa, an American-born Japanese, assistant professor of English at the Illinois Institute of Technology, has been lecturing and writing about the application of certain scientific and literary principles—semantic principles—to the kind of talking and thinking we do in everyday life. In his new book,* Hayakawa gives many examples of the human tendency to confuse mere words with objects. He points out that just as an engine can overheat and stop as a result of internal obstructions, so human minds often overheat and stop as a result of dogmas, received opinions, or private obsessions. "Sometimes a set of obsessions may seize multitudes of people at once, so that hysteria becomes epidemic and nations go mad."

A chimpanzee can be taught to drive a car, observes Hayakawa, but if a red light shows when it is only half way across the street, it will stop in the middle of the crossing. If a green light shows while another car is stalled just ahead, the chimp goes right on regardless of consequences. It "identifies the signal with the thing for which the signal stands," and the red light doesn't merely *stand* for stop; it *is* stop.

WE humans usually do better than that when we drive. We try to make allowances for the total situation we're in. But when we tackle social problems, we're likely to follow signal words or labels and disregard modifying circumstances. We act as if any word or combination of words that sounds true *must* be true. We forget that even *if* a combination of words says something true, it still does not tell all. A reader gets one idea of a man from the sentence, "His grocer said he was slow about paying his bills"; but a different idea if the sentence also says, "but all his neighbors spoke highly of him." Likewise, we get totally different impressions according to how a sentence is "slanted," or loaded with prejudice. It is one thing to say, "the bill was steam-rollered through the Senate," and another to say that "the bill was passed over strong opposition." "The Russians advanced five miles," does not mean the same as, "the Russians were stopped cold after an advance of only five miles." "His manner is rude and uncultivated" is different from, "His manner is simple and unspoiled."

If a person happens to be prejudiced against Jews, then the word Jew doesn't mean the same as it would to one who has no such prejudice. That is because prejudice causes one to confuse words with something inside one's nervous system. If Mr. Miller, a Jew, succeeds in business, that to a prejudiced person "proves" that "Jews are smart." But, suggests Hayakawa, if Mr. Johansen succeeds in business it

(*Continued on page* 21)

*LANGUAGE IN ACTION. By S. I. Hayakawa. New York: Harcourt Brace & Co. 338 pp. $2.

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FICTION IN AMERICA

THERE never was a form of society in which the writer was not something of a misfit. There never will be. If the form of statism now called Communism came into full force and flower tomorrow, after a certain initial enthusiasm had died down you would not find writers a bit better adapted to the new routine of life than they have been to the old. Born writers must dree their own weird. The moment you try to prescribe for them, tell them what to do, push them around, force them into the proportions of any Procrustean bed-frame of social or economic life, you begin to destroy their function and usefulness. That is what folk with a bureaucratic tendency and orderly rational minds will never understand about the creative impulse. Pedagogues, too, are always laying down rules for writers, which good writers immediately prove to be nonsense by breaking all of them. In its early money-mad years, America tried to ignore writers, to hoot them as sissies, to tell them what to do, to jeer them as vagabonds and ne'er-do-wells —much as Elizabethan England treated her mummers and actor-folk. There remains a tendency today in America to rank writers by what they earn, how much they are advertised, and how good businessmen they are!

The great American institution, the slick-paper illustrated magazine, still guards the sacred flame of American commercialism. And it aims its stories at the apprehensions of the business-like average. American advertising, indeed, has adapted the short story so well to its own purposes, together with the illustrative material, that it is now almost impossible to tell a magazine romance from one whose aim is advertisement! The ballyhoo, in both, for the American way of life, bristling with bathroom fixtures, stuffed with food and drink in lighted electrical ice-boxes, exploding into a thousand muscle-building breakfast-foods, is really much the same. The whole business pays extraordinarily well. We mean in money. Americans are a people of great ingenuity at making money, and many of our writers may be numbered among them. Nor are we merely ingenious, we are extraordinarily skillful, and many of our writers of fiction have developed the greatest skill in exploiting whatever they know at the very highest prices. Consequently, you will find the short stories even in the most commercial magazines written with smartness, dash, and finish. They run as smoothly as any of our millions of machines. They carry you as quickly and painlessly as our myriad motor-cars (just *where* seems immaterial!) They purvey the lingo of the moment, the fashions, the sports, the smart topics, the big news. Some of them are remarkably clever concoctions. It is only when you have read a good many on the run, and sit down to digest what you have absorbed, that you realize you are still hungry. The highly embellished ice-cream sodas you have been gulping contain no such sustenance as real literature or real life.

That is, of course, the old critical sourpuss attitude! As a matter of fact, our popular magazines, as well as those more eclectic, do from time to time contain strong and authentic writing—chiefly, in the former, about our country's past, not her present. But that is one view. Another may be obtained by scanning such a magazine, perhaps, as *Story* (if there were any other magazines like *Story!*) or whatever independent and more or less radical publications take a flier in fiction. Read their offerings. For the most part they are apt to be somewhat formless, or highly experimental, or rough dried and all among the dirty dishes. Occasionally—in whichever camp you select—you will be hit in the face by a real short story. For another theory of ours is that really good writing eventually and inevitably comes to the top. There are plenty of markets, too, in America.

We Americans, of course, regard the short story as our own particular province, and have ever since we had "O. Henry." Every year successors to Edward J. O'Brien work like demons to present to us, in several anthologies that are national institutions, the pick of the crop. And at that, maybe our short stories compare favorably with those from any other neck of the woods. The best are, of course, not written for any market. How could they be? And sometimes there are better natural writers abroad in the land than at other times. Meanwhile our fantastic "fiction industry" romps ahead at high pressure. But that, as Kipling so often said, is "another story." If we have produced the cleverest bogus art in the world in these United States, we have also erupted with some of the more honest. And more and more we are becoming able to discriminate and distinguish. That is, perhaps, as much as anyone can expect. If we increase the appreciative and critical virtues we have acquired of late years, through hard experience, perhaps we shan't, in the end, come off so badly!

W. R. B.

Fall

By George Abbe

THE lacquer red, the Burgundy,
The wine red and the leather,
Mix with the bronze on the autumn sea,
The drifting sea of the fall oak trees,
Beaten and drawn by the weather—
The weather of blue sky, air washed clean,
The wise wind giving its heart to green,
And changing that green to flame and ash.
The sweet fern will know the winter's lash,
And the blueberry leaf,
The chestnut's tan
Will be buried in white before mortal man
Will see such color again, such brief
And pagan loveliness thrown forth
On the valley's breast, on the winds of the north.
And deep in the firelight that hearths will know,
Beyond roar of the cold and hiss of snow,
The lacquer red and the ruby clear
Will cry in the embers, will breathe and glow,
For the heart of the leaves that burned this year
On the hills of the earth can never fade;
They will shine in the spirits that hold them dear,
They will sing in the fires that men have made.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Inventory of Americana

SIR:—The American Literature Group of the Modern Language Association is taking an inventory of the depositories of material on *American literature and American literary history*. Data is being collected from the investigations of the Historical Manuscripts Commission, the American Library Association, and other sources, as well as by direct appeal to librarians and collectors, but it is inevitable that many important collections will escape notice.

If you have not already been approached, will you assist in the Committee's work by reporting the character and size of your collection?

ROBERT E. SPILLER, *Chairman*
Swarthmore College,
Swarthmore, Pa.

Answers, Please!

SIR:—Would your readers care to interpret this code? Your Mr. Collins would hardly like it except in the publicity man's sense that anything printed is literature.

W	RT	TRM
WT	RO	LET
WW	ROT	LEM
WWT	RD	SAU
R	FD	MAY

G. W. BARNES.
New York, N. Y.

Life in London

SIR:—Your readers will, I think, be interested in what the famous English humorist, W. W. Jacobs, author of "The Monkey's Paw," and "Many Cargoes" writes me about the war:

"We are having an unpleasant time; but hope to win through with the help of the U. S. A. You must forgive us if you find that most of us have an Oliver Twist complex!

"I was in London August and September, last year, the time the Battle of Britain was on. It was a very noisy time and sleep was hard to come by. Since then the city, as you will have heard, has been badly knocked about. However, I suppose we shall pull through. But we have lost things we can never replace: our old buildings and churches, things that good Americans came over to see; and left a lot of good money behind as a result.

"War is so strong-flavored, that it swallows up all the other flavors of life. We rise of a morning with our ears cocked for the wireless, and retire at night with the latest news singing in our heads. All the pleasant, everyday things of life are submerged. Even scandal suffers, and gossip loses its point.

"I am 78 in a couple of months' time, but I hope to live to see the end of the war. That is, of course, if it ends as all decent people hope it will end. And I think it will.

"With kind regards to you all, and heartfelt thanks for the immense help the U. S. A. is giving us."

Since leaving his London home, Mr. Jacobs has been at a small town in Worcestershire called Upton-on-Severn.

CYRIL CLEMENS.
Webster Groves, Missouri

"You've treated them already, doctor. They're just finishing up their reading. . . ."

Fitts and Rilke

SIR:—I wish to express my interest in and agreement with Dudley Fitts's review (*SRL,* Oct. 25) of the biography of Rainer Maria Rilke by E. M. Butler.

Mr. Fitts seems to be the one reviewer whom I have read who knows Rilke's poetry. The other reviewers that I have happened upon evidently derived their opinions of the poet and his work solely from Miss Butler's book, which possesses from beginning to end — as Mr. Fitts most aptly expresses it — "a curiously nagging animosity."

I met Rilke through Auguste Rodin in September, 1908, in Rodin's studio, 77 rue de Varenne—now The Musée Rodin. I was not cognizant of the fact that Rilke was then acting as Rodin's secretary, nor was I aware that I was meeting one of the foremost poets, if not indeed the greatest poet, of the present century.

Rodin had remarked to me, as I was leaving his studio in the rue de l'Université, that the best interpretation of his work had been published in a monograph by Rainer Maria Rilke, and asked if I knew the book. On my reply in the negative Rodin said he would give me a note of introduction to Rilke, which he thereupon wrote. I drove at once to the address.

Tall, slender, blond, Rilke greeted me with cordial, unassuming courtesy —his manner impressed me as one of unusual grace and simplicity. I spent some two hours with Rilke, talking in French in the large studio over-looking the convent garden—described by Henry James in a chapter in his "Ambassadors," including the vivid word-portrait of the "great sculptor," which conveys the impression of the painting of Rodin by Sargent.

I left Paris shortly afterward, but Rilke sent me—to my home in America —autographed copies of his two books of "New Poems" which had just been published, and the book on Rodin.

How different in spirit is Miss Butler's bulky biography from the slender monograph by Rilke. At the time of the publication of the translation into English (1919) a New York reviewer wrote, "It is the only kind of biography that is worth while—the drama of the soul that expresses itself in creation."

The portrait in Miss Butler's book is a distortion of Rilke. There is no resemblance whatsoever to him in the frontispiece drawing by Kolo Mosen. Rilke never wore a monocle. He had an extraordinarily mobile, intellectual face, a sensitive, full mouth and the "firm structure of the eyebrow gladly sunk in the shadow of contemplation" —the face full of dreams. Any one interested in his personal appearance will find reproductions from eight photographs in the book "Rainer Maria Rilke" by Lou Andreas Salome.

Appreciation of Mr. Fitts and the *SRL.*

J. L. TRAUSIL.
Silvermine, Conn.

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She had more of everything than any woman...

HER NAME WAS MARIA. She knew neither love nor hate. Born somewhere off the coast of China, she matured quickly, became restless, and tore off across the Pacific at a thousand miles a day. Along the way she [illegible] a roaring typhoon

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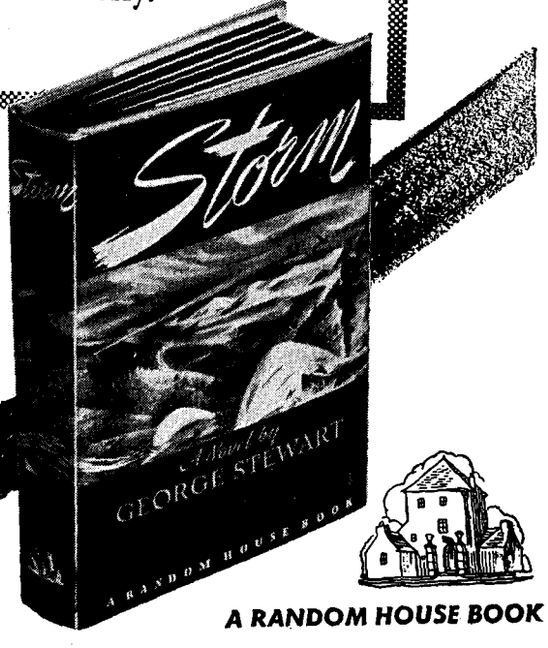

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Elemental Symphony

STORM. By George Stewart. Random House. New York: 1941. 349 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PAUL B. SEARS

MOST of us forget that we live at the bottom of an ocean of air, a fact which has set the pattern of our corporeal life. The behavior of this restless aerosphere shapes the destiny of nations and affects the lives of individuals at every turn. More than almost any feature of the natural world, an understanding of the atmosphere depends upon comity and partnership among scientific men everywhere. As the author puts it, "Since the storm knows no boundary of race or continent, men of all nations perforce have labored together to learn the ways of weather."

Nearly three centuries ago, it was recorded of one Charles Stuart that "Gresham College he mightily laughed at, for spending time only in weighing of ayre, and doing nothing else since they sat." His Majesty did not realize that he was laughing at the birth of modern chemistry. Today George Stewart, of California, steeped in the rich lore of air and its ways, and working with sure craftsmanship, gives us a major symphony on the atmosphere.

His novel is the biography of a storm, engendered of the meeting of two great air-masses in the ocean near Japan. In its twelve-day existence it moves toward the continent of North America at a rate of a thousand miles a day. In climactic fashion it debouches upon our Western coast, bringing not only rain and life, but flood, death, destruction, and brief paralysis of the vital services which hold modern civilization together.

With the skill and precision of a Moorish design the progress of this vast disturbance is interwoven with the doings of men and the course of their institutions. Its birth, as a tiny and remote fluctuation of pressure noted by a single ship, is detected by a young weather scientist scanning and posting his daily information from a fourth of the globe. Glimpses of the routine business of the weather office, and delicately drawn contrasts between the youngster and two earlier generations of weatherwise men, give a most remarkable exposition of the revolutionary modern science of the air.

The major themes of the symphony are afforded by the impact of the storm upon titanic organizations—power, telephone, railroad, highway, and upon the agriculture which sustains them all. Orchestration is supplied by dramatic events in the lives of those who use and maintain these great utilities.

Necessarily composed of incidents, the book is in no sense episodic or confused, even when dealing with confusion. With remarkable skill of suggestion the incidents move along, and interest is sustained. After all, there is material enough. Lovers do get caught in mountain snowstorms, linemen perish at their duty, the maintenance of traffic does demand action, even heroism.

Man's deepest problems, even in a world completely scientific (which ours is not) lie within his own heart. But we have passed the time when our spirits can be well counselled by those who ignore the great web of interrelation between the animate and inanimate. We are ready enough to commit to the asylum inventors of perpetual motion, because we consider the idea scientifically absurd. Yet we rebel at the idea of responsible conduct which is implicit in the fabric which binds man to man, and all men to the rest of nature.

To such folly this book is an antidote. It would be important even though it were done with less mastery than it shows.

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Metamorphosis of a Broker

THE CAREER OF PHILIP HAZEN. By John Harriman. New York: Howell, Soskin & Co. 1941. 354 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by RICHARD R. PLANT

"CAREER" is hardly the term to describe Philip Hazen's story. It is a study in decline. Philip Hazen ultimately loses everything, including his conception of Wall Street as a life work, and the Stock Exchange as a reality. It is John Harriman's good fortune to know New York's downtown district so well that, with him, the reader sees through the game called "Finance." It is his artistry that makes credible the renascence of a Wall Street man.

Mr. Harriman examines, with sharp insight, the business of buying, selling, and speculation, revealing it as a kind of chimerical poker game. Solid and substantial on the surface, it shrinks to a mere hypothesis when stripped of its face value. The stock market is nervous as a prima-donna, unpredictable as a race horse, and superstitious as a colored stable boy. Philip Hazen, millionaire head of Hazen & Co., learns this in a slow and painful process which constitutes the main theme of the novel. The fact, however, that the book contains a definite philosophy does not mean that we deal with doctrines rather than with people. On the contrary, we observe, in a close-up, The Rich, neither distorted, as in novels of a certain school where they represent the evils of Capitalism, nor glamorized, as in other popular productions where their lives appear as a summary of one year's society news. The Hazens are as real as Dickens's more humble people, but their struggles for survival are on a larger scale and are more terrifying to watch.

In one respect, I think, the author's instinct suddenly flags. Philip's fight for his name, his firm, and his reputation against his antagonist, Swade, has enough substance for a fascinating plot. It was not necessary to have Swade steal his wife as well. The over-motivation makes him a traditional villain.

Another, but somewhat minor shortcoming, is Mr. Harriman's description of Newport society, which is not as bitter and amusing as it might be. His novel is however a splendid portrayal of Big Business, written in a lucid and vigorous style, and without a single cliché.

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Ferber...

SARATOGA TRUNK. By Edna Ferber. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1941. 352 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by FAIRFAX DOWNEY

"HI, wait a minute, fellas," broke in the tabloid reporter. "Something tells me Mr. Maroon isn't kidding. Are you, Mr. Maroon? Say listen, maybe we're missing the real story." . . .

They did miss the real story, that group of newspaper men and women interviewing Clint and Clio Maroon in their rooms in the United States Hotel, Saratoga. Of course they already had a big story: the old Colonel's announcement that he was giving away his many millions. Also they had a deadline to meet. Furthermore there was dynamite in the sensational confession the old-timer from Texas was trying so hard to make. Add to press of time and chance of libel the fact that any reporter prefers to cover one yarn at a time.

So they missed it. No matter. Miss Ferber, who was a reporter when she was seventeen, covered it for them, and did she do a job on it! The story within the "frame," the fabulous career of Clint and Clio, is her new novel, "Saratoga Trunk." Unpacking it is absorbing entertainment. There's everything in it but the kitchen stove—no, that's in, too, and the New Orleans and Saratoga dishes cooked on it will make your mouth water. The author could hardly be expected to provide an appendix with recipes, yet there is sure to be a demand for them. Perhaps the publishers will come through with a gustatory supplement, gathering rosebuds and publicity while they may.

Miss Ferber serves up some very nice phrases, too. As for instance, in describing the *Vieux Carré* of New Orleans: "Past the old houses whose exquisitely wrought ironwork decoration was like a black lace shawl thrown across the white bosom of a Spanish *señora.*" Or of Saratoga: "A neat New England town with a veneer of temporary sophistication, like a spinster school teacher gone gay."

And there is also a theme. Colonel Maroon states it when he tells the reporters:

> This is going to be a different America . . . This country today is finer and more honest and more free and democratic than it has been since way back in Revolutionary days. For a century we big fellows could grab and run. They can't do it today. It's going to be the day of the little man. Tell them to have faith and believe that they're the best Americans in the decentest government the world has ever seen.

But none of these—theme or background or well-turned phrases—get in the way of the main business, which is the telling of a tale; they only further it and enhance it, which is as it should be. Perhaps the beginning of the *liaison* between Clint and Clio in her New Orleans house is rather too lightly sketched. Many an incident could have been developed to greater length. Indeed the book could have been half again as long without being overwritten. But Miss Ferber has been mindful of that cardinal principle of the entertainer: Stop while they still want more. Successful playwright that she is, she knows good theater.

"Saratoga Trunk," of course, is just that. Good theater. Can it be a mere coincidence? No, never! The story, it may be confidently predicted, will soon be out from between boards and on the boards. Call in Collaborator George Kaufman. Page the one and only Jerome Kern to compose the score. He hasn't had a chance like this since "Show Boat"; the book is crammed with song cues. Cast Clio, Clint, Kaka, Cupidon. What parts!

Please reserve me two on the aisle, Miss F.

Fairfax Downey's new book, "Indian Fighting Army," has just been published.

Guatama

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THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

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Edna Ferber

Mackay...

VALIANT DUST. By Margaret Mackprang Mackay. New York: The John Day Co. 1941. 561 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by NYM WALES

MRS. MACKAY has been quietly writing increasingly promising novels in China for several years. She became known to the public originally through writing verse for *The Saturday Evening Post,* and her first novel, "Like Water Flowing," was published about five years ago. That unique study of the psychology of a Eurasian girl and her mixed marriage was followed by "Lady with Jade," a tale of an American curio-lover in Peking. These two books were too pretty-pretty for my own taste; too much poeticizing about the landscape and about subtle, delicate emotionalism. Mrs. Mackay seemed too enamoured of words to see the woods for the trees. The sound and smell of China itself was always in the dim background like a muted Greek chorus, but the reality was not there. Having committed these first external and psychological impressions to print, the novelist has now come of age and reached into the heart, or rather the meat (though this word seems out of place), of her subject. This historical novel of Victorian Tientsin is a mature and superb piece of work, as well as a monumental labor of research and writing.

"Valiant Dust" is the best novel that has been written about the days of empire-building in China and about foreign life in the treaty-ports. The scene is laid in the Kiplingesque eighties and nineties when Britain laid dominion over palm and pine and pagoda—but was rudely checked by the anti-foreign Boxer Uprising in Peking.

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It is the story of a small foreign community in Tientsin half-consciously carrying out Britain's imperial program in their petty commercial but indomitable way—"All valiant dust that builds on dust," as Kipling said, with more prescience than he realized then.

Elspeth, a typical young Scotswoman, sails to Tientsin where she establishes a large family with Angus Maclaren, an importer and exporter. She is, however, secretly in love with Philip Ashbrooke, a poetic intellectual type much despised by the Tientsin colonial mind for his interest in things Chinese. She must, therefore, in the Victorian way, accept her husband's many infidelities as the punishment of God for her own wayward heart.

The story portrays with amazing skill the life and psychology of a little watertight diehard colony of foreigners during twenty years of troubles with the Chinese climaxed by the Boxer Uprising. No phase of the picture is neglected and the characterizations are excellent. There is all the hypocrisy, the subterranean jealousy and suspicion, the shady business methods, the contempt and fear of the Chinese, the love of ponies and dogs, the barren club life, that was and still is the atmosphere of treaty-port life, such as remains. There is Angus's Chinese concubine and her illegitimate child; there is Miss Chiltonham, the pre-Raphaelite esthete turned governess; Mrs. Timmey, the missionary's daughter seeking to make up for a lost girlhood; Sneaker Meekin, the remittance man who blackmails Angus; the British consul and his wife around whom local society turns; the Russian Baroness; Flossie Green, the good-hearted prostitute; Chinese servants and compradores—a whole panorama.

Mrs. Mackay audaciously chose a most difficult subject for a sympathetic and entertaining novel, and she does not romanticize her figures unduly aside from involving them in numerous adventures and escapades. From any point of view, it seems to me that Tientsin is the ugliest, barrenest, most unexciting city I have ever visited. How anyone could even live there, much less write a book about the place, seems an achievement. Yet Mrs. Mackay has created quite an epic story out of these drab unimportant materials, and this is a fundamental test for the good novelist. In the character of Angus, for instance, she has drawn an important portrait of the Old China Hand, with all his peculiar points, good and bad. She has recaptured a mood by fitting the language to the Victorian era, though one rather shudders at something like "to sip the fresh sweet kisses from her lips."

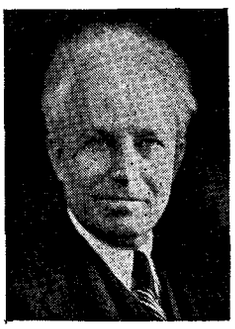
Almedingen . . .

TOMORROW WILL COME. By E. M. Almedingen. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. An Atlantic Monthly Press Publication. 1941. 343 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by KLAUS LAMBRECHT

THE most appealing feature of this book is undoubtedly its atmosphere. The subject is autobiographical, and the presentation hardly goes beyond the author's own experiences, her occasional meditations, and the slow realization of the circumstances that surround and influence her life. From the first chapter on it becomes quite clear that the author's mind is largely receptive but not critical, that it registers conditions by their appearance only and does not ask much for reasons, causes, and relations. She has lived through the most disturbing years of the Russian Revolution without knowing even now (or so it seems) that she witnessed the greatest and most consequential social upheaval of our time. However, those events did throw a light—or a shadow rather—on her life, and to her this was more important than the events themselves. Her world has been, and probably still is, a private world of changing lights and colors, of shifting moods and atmospheres, most faithfully and fascinatingly described in the pages of this book.

First there is the atmosphere of a childhood in St. Petersburg, the dream-



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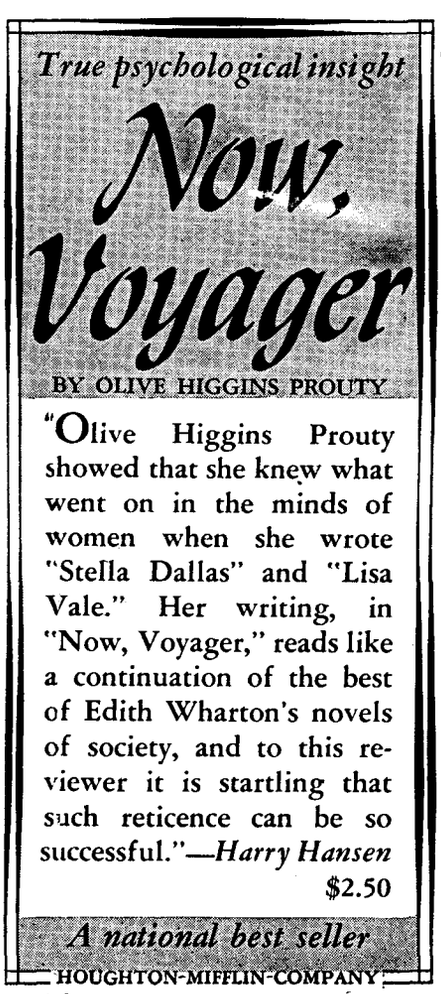
like walks among imposing streets and squares and buildings, the atmosphere of a slowly disintegrating home, the worship of a father whom she hardly knew but whose name was magic. Then the exultant mood of frequent journeys to a grandmother in Finland; the gloom and brooding, the inner revolt, and the final relaxation of a time spent in a fashionable boarding school, haunted with the memories of the admired father who had been teaching there. And after that came war, and with it more insecurity, more poverty and hunger, outwardly resulting in a feverish activity that gave no satisfaction. The indifference it produced lasted well into the years of the revolution. Those years left upon the author only the vague impression of a nightmare. It was not the horror of the shootings and the executions, nor the elimination of a class she did not belong to, and all its established institutions—it was the filth, the corruption, the hatred, the insanity, and even the bureaucratism of those early years that made her leave the country which had so amply provided the dreams—both good and bad—of her youth.

This book is rich, abundant, and poetic—and it fully merits the $5,000 prize it has been awarded by the judges of the Atlantic Monthly Non-Fiction Contest.


True psychological insight
Now, Voyager
BY OLIVE HIGGINS PROUTY
"Olive Higgins Prouty showed that she knew what went on in the minds of women when she wrote "Stella Dallas" and "Lisa Vale." Her writing, in "Now, Voyager," reads like a continuation of the best of Edith Wharton's novels of society, and to this reviewer it is startling that such reticence can be so successful."—Harry Hansen
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Cloete . . .

THE HILL OF DOVES. By Stuart Cloete. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1941. 633 *pp.* $2.75.

Reviewed by GARRETT MATTINGLY

STUART CLOETE'S saga of South African history plods on across the years, sometimes at a pace reminiscent of the ox-drawn wagons of the Boers, but always with their honest, workmanlike solidity and sometimes with an exhilarating sense of the waiting earth beneath them and the broad horizons between which they move.

This third volume of the series takes its name from the battle of Majuba Hill in 1881, the brisk action in which the redcoat column, advancing as they had failed to learn not to do at New Orleans, withered under the fire of invisible riflemen; when the sturdy farmers of the veldt, innocent of the intricacies of Mr. Gladstone's conscience, went home thinking that they had whipped the British Empire and conquered forever the independence of the Transvaal. Few of them were farsighted enough to guess that the skirmish at Majuba marked only an eddy in the advance of a relentless tide (the inflowing tide of industrial civilization), more certainly fatal to their patriarchal way of life than the force of any empire. Because they lay in an eddy, the years around Majuba saw the typical development of the self-isolating Boers, and this novel is appropriately more a pastoral idyl than an epic, bracketed between the heroic triumph of the Great Trek, which only old Philippus now remembers, and the still distant menace of the final tragedy.

The bucolic loves of Dirk and Lena, the daily round of a Boer farmhouse, and the robust humors of the soil are the central theme, into which politics and war seem to intrude only in passing. In its externals, the sights and sounds and salty talk of the barnyard and the crossroads, the central theme is well handled, unexciting perhaps, but as satisfyingly real and solid as a painting by one of the Little Dutch masters. When it comes to the interior soliloquies of the characters one is not so sure. Do inarticulate Boer farmers and their women really think in such abstract terms, and organize their thoughts in such energetic and poetic paragraphs? Then one remembers that Mr. Cloete is also a poet, and that it is only in these soliloquies that he allows himself to play the chorus to his puppets.

Garrett Mattingly is the author of the recently published "Catherine of Aragon."

Anderson . . .

THE DAYS GROW COLD. By Barbara Tunnell Anderson. New York: The Macmillan Co. 1941. 277 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HARRIET COLBY

NOVELS of the South, dreaming its way gracefully deeper and deeper into picturesque decay, are nothing new, but in this novel Barbara Tunnell Anderson has given a fresh and vigorous turn to a familiar theme. Through the eyes of a little girl of eleven she tells the story of a South that is gradually, painfully, turning its face away from its rich past and beginning to look ahead to something new.

Lucinda's family moves to Macklin, a small town that might be anywhere in the heart of the South—to a house just outside the gates of what was formerly one of the great plantations. Castleton is a legend of the Golden Age; tales of the splendor from which it has fallen and of its present fastidious decay, form the intricate web of the town's gossip; they are woven lovingly into the fabric of Lucinda's dreams. But Castleton remains aloof and inaccessible behind its wall of trees, inhabited only by two lonely women. Last of the Cass line, Mrs. Reeves and her daughter Emily live in proud starvation, cherishing their memories, guarding their one remaining possession, a huge portrait of the Cass family in the days of its grandeur.

The shadow of Castleton falls long upon Macklin. Only Miss Carley, a clear-eyed schoolteacher, and Curtis Hardin, whose paintings of half-starved Negroes have brought him honor everywhere save among his own people, see Castleton in its true perspective. They are the rescuers, Lucinda and her young friends the rescued. A small beginning—a school for painting and music for the town's children—and an ironic climax connected with Castleton itself and its great picture, point the way out, the road away from faded dreams toward a brisk and urgent reality.

The novel has many faults; its theme is too large—and too important—not to lose dignity and emphasis by being presented through the eyes of a little girl, whose fears and fastasies, vivid and intense as they are, too often obscure the main issue. Miss Anderson has, in short, failed rather conspicuously to decide between writing a social study and painting a portrait of a child and a family. But hers is, at any rate, a novel, alive and eager, by someone with something to say.

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DO WORDS SCARE US?

(*Continued from page 11*)

proves only that Mr. Johansen is smart. To one who doesn't like Negroes, and wishes to see them kept "in their place," it sounds plausible when a demagogue says, "If a person has even a drop of Negro blood, he is a Negro." But those are only words. To another person it might be equally logical to say, "If this supposed Negro has a drop of white blood, then he is white."

> Some of us go daily past gangs of WPA workers sweating over the construction of roads and bridges and still declare quite honestly, "I never saw a WPA worker doing anything useful in all my life." By the *definition* some of us have, WPA is "made work"; "made work" is not "real work"; therefore, even if WPA workers have built schools, parks and municipal auditoriums, they weren't really working. Furthermore, many of us encounter daily hundreds of cars driven by women who handle them expertly; yet we declare, again quite honestly, "I never saw a woman yet who could really drive a car." By *definition,* women are "timid," "nervous" and "easily frightened"; therefore they "can't drive."

Hayakawa has pointed out the danger of such expressions as, "We must listen to *both* sides of the question." The danger of such two-way logic is the assumption, frequently unexamined, that every question has fundamentally only two sides. We tend to think in opposites, to feel that what is not "good" must be "bad." This feeling is heightened when we are excited or angry. During war times, it is often felt that whoever is not a "100 per cent patriot" must be a "foreign agent," or a "fifth columnist." But what about the 99.7 per cent patriots? When children are taught history they want to know if this or that ruler was a "good king" or a "bad king." They do not ask how much good and bad was in each. In popular literature, as Hayakawa observes, and in movie scenarios written for childish mentalities, there are always "heroes" to be cheered and "villains" to be hissed.

The two-valued way of thinking is relied upon by Nazi party propagandists in Germany almost exclusively. "All things offensive are lined up upon the 'bad' side with 'Jewish dominated plutocracy.' Anyone or anything that stands in the way of Hitler's wishes is 'Jewish,' 'degenerate,' 'corrupt,' 'democratic,' 'internationalist,' and as a crowning insult 'non-Aryan.' If Hitler approves, it is 'Aryan.' The absurdity of classifying the Japanese as 'Aryan' just because Japan and Germany have friendly understand-

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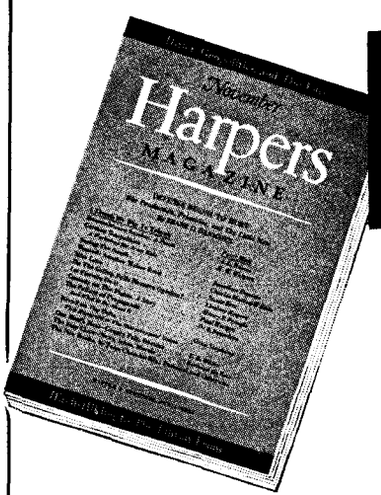

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ings, of classifying pointed roofs as 'Aryan' and flat roofs as 'international' and therefore 'Jewish,' does not in the least deter Hitler or his propaganda minister." But such infantile nonsense is not confined to Germany. If one believed either the Republican or Democratic orators in the last Presidential campaign in the United States, everything ever done or contemplated by one party was "good" and everything by the rival party "evil."

If the language of science were as absurd as that of demagogy then we would not give temperature in degrees on a scale; a thing would be either "hot" or "cold." There would be no such standards of measurement as horse-power or voltage; nor speed in miles-per-hour. Everything would be "strong" or "weak"; "fast or "slow."

"Undue regard for words makes us tend to permit words to act as barriers between us and reality instead of as guides to reality." In proof of that, Hayakawa gives a personal experience. He was connected with the University of Wisconsin, and travelled over that state at a time when there was a bitter controversy between the president of the University and the governor of the state. Strangers and casual acquaintances would ask, "Say, what's the inside on that affair at the University? It's all *politics*, isn't it?" To save time, Hayakawa would reply, "Yes, I suppose it is." Whereupon the inquirer would look pleased and say, "That's what I thought!" The belief that "politics" was the appropriate noise to make satisfied the questioner, even though nothing had been said to settle the question of what *kind* of politics was involved.

Had the governor abused his political office, or had he carried out his political duty? No one bothered to go into such details. The one word, *politics,* was accepted as covering all the ground.

Word-superstitions and delusions sometimes interfere with our ability to solve economic problems. As Hayakawa says, " 'Planning' has become such a loaded word that to accuse a politician of advocating 'planning' may ruin his political career." If a town suffers from disease epidemics that start in slums, and someone suggests that municipal planning to get rid of slums is needed, the word may suggest to many influential citizens "the five-year plan," "communism," "regimentation," "Godlessness." Consequently, perhaps, nothing can be done about removing slums.

"Advertising," says Hayakawa, "has become the art of overcoming us with words. When the consumer demands that, as a step toward enabling him to orientate himself by facts rather than by brand names, all products be required by law to have informative labels and verifiable government grading, the entire advertising industry, backed by newspapers and magazines, raises a hue and cry about 'government interference with business'."

We behave much more foolishly toward some things than toward others. "When we are having a car repaired we do not ask, 'Is the remedy you suggest consistent with the principles of thermodynamics? What would Faraday or Newton have done under similar circumstances?'—We only ask, 'What will be the results'? But a different thing happens when we are trying to have society repaired. Few people ask what will be the practical results of a proposed social change. Remedies suggested are almost always discussed in the light of questions to which no verifiable answers can be given: 'Are your proposals consistent with sound economic policy? What would Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, or Andrew Jackson have said? Would it be a step in the direction of communism or fascism?' "

It has been proved that an understanding of our slavery to words solves many human problems. In the department of student health at the University of Chicago, Dr. Charles B. Congdon, the medical psychiatrist there, has found that a surprisingly large number of students have had nervous or emotional upsets because of their attitude toward words.

A young woman student had physical symptoms of illness, the cause of which could be traced back to an emotional disturbance from a love affair. She had married a man who told her he loved her, and then had discovered that he didn't love her.

"What made you think he loved you?" asked the doctor.

"He *told* me he loved me," she repeated. She had thought the word love *was* love. Then having been taken in by a word, she applied two-valued thinking and decided that she was through with *all* men. But once she saw that her whole trouble was from words, she began to take a more rational view of life.

Many students are scared and upset by the word *failure.* If they don't make as good a scholastic record as they had expected to, then they jump from hope of *success* to assumption of *failure*—two-way thinking again. The treatment in such cases is usually to show that 98 per cent, 85 per cent, or almost any percentage of the success hoped for does not mean failure—that there is a long scale of degrees, just as there is a scale between extremes of hot or cold. The word "failure" is not failure, any more than the word "democracy" is democracy.

HAYAKAWA makes it clear that ability to recognize truth—or to recognize a lie—when one hears it or sees it, is of vital importance in this day of propaganda and censorship. He shows that mere words are as frequently a barrier to communication as an aid. He uses the new science of semantics to give the lay reader a kind of guidebook through the world of words. The book is not devoted to explaining words with more words but to showing how human beings react, sometimes sanely, sometimes unsanely, both to the words they hear and to the words they use themselves.

In simple, clear English, the author points out the tricks we all play on ourselves through words, and he explains the kind the discipline needed to make language an instrument for, rather than an obstacle to, better understanding, and coöperation.

As Hayakawa observes, "The meanings of words are *not* in the words; they are in us."

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by

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SOME CLINICAL NOTES

(*Continued from page* 3)

ried 29 short stories, 13 per cent of the total contents. During 1940 its monthly story comprised only 7 per cent of the total, a 50 per cent drop in ten years.

The number of stories appearing in *Scribner's Magazine* steadily declined for years up to October, 1936. In that issue, the first under different editorship and in a revamped format, were published six short stories. As the new editors gained in experience, however, the number of stories declined until during its last year of publication before becoming *Scribner's-Commentator* (*all* fact), the magazine printed only two. Had the first issue average been maintained, 72 would have been carried. In lieu of short stories, *Scribner's* resorted to carrying a novelette in each issue.

In 1930, the *Forum* presented twelve stories; in 1939, the last full year before merger, none. Formerly, *The Living Age* reprinted much short fiction from foreign sources. Today it carries none.

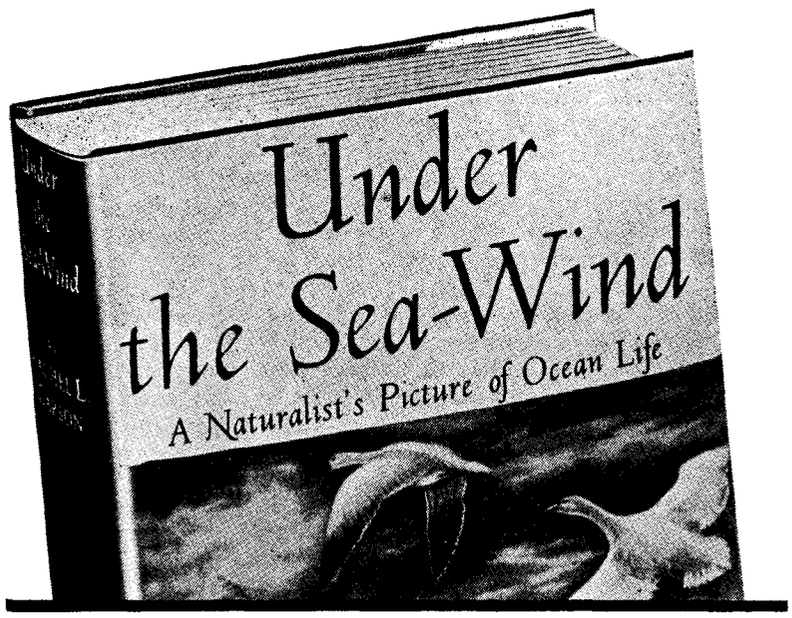
The Atlantic Monthly contained nineteen short stories in 1920, comprising 11 per cent of the contents of the magazine. In 1940, the number of stories was the same but they represented less than 7 per cent of the total. *Harper's Bazaar* printed 41 stories in 1930; in 1940, only 27. Fiction in *The Yale Review* declined from 16 per cent in 1930 to 10 per cent in 1940.

These examples could be continued endlessly. What is the cause of the malady?

Is it "the temper of the times"? For more than twenty years, editors and writers have been declaring that the American reading public is "fact-hungry." Wars, rumors of wars, depression, recession, and labor upheavals have tended to make people "look at the record." And yet this country has known many periods of national unrest and anxiety in the past hundred years without an eclipse of short fiction; actually, in troubled times, the public has sought release and escape through fiction. Furthermore, fiction has usually been considered a more powerful and illuminating medium than non-fiction for the probing of problems. No, some other explanation is needed.

Another answer is that some of the better short-story writers have simply stopped contributing to the quality magazines and have turned to better-paying fields. This is true, to some extent, yet it is no new development; writers have been doing just that in this country for decades. But what has become of the custom of "arrived" authors, writing for the mass-circulation, big-paying magazines, the colossi, occasionally contributing a story to one of the quality periodicals because of the "prestige" involved? Perhaps the prestige of the qualities has faded somewhat and writers are increasingly more eager to take the cash and let the credit go. But some less partial, more valid explanation still seems needed.

Many short-story writers have gone to Hollywood, others now prepare radio scripts. It seems obvious, however, that most film and radio writers have



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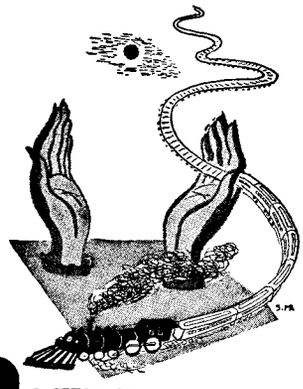
been recruited from among "popular" authors, those who might best or most easily touch mass minds and mass emotions. Unquestionably the movies and the radio are competing with magazine stories for people's attention; but the competition logically, although not actually, is more severe in the field of mass-circulation magazines than among serious publications. Few authentic, talented short-story writers have worked regularly or for any extended period of time in either industry. The good writers are not in Hollywood and the broadcasting studios in significant numbers, or they are lost in new media. How many original, outstanding scenarios or radio scripts have appeared to rival the great quality magazine stories of the past?

Some editors insist that very few good short stories are currently available. The commercial appeal of the standardized story has probably undermined the potential artistry of some writers, men and women who might have developed into significant figures And yet, although authors must eat and all artists are profoundly influenced by their times, scores of fiction writers in the past have refused to be cheapened by prevailing trade winds. Since 1929, some experimental magazines—proving grounds for many authentic writers—have expired. But "little" magazines have always had a "now-you-see-them-now-you-don't" existence. Large numbers of them have appeared all through the past decade, quite enough to print the best output of the apprentice fictioneer. Today there are sufficient experimental and quality magazines, and quite enough intelligent, even astute editors to publish whatever significant, high-grade fiction is available. *Story,* for example, has been publishing consistently sound fiction for the past decade (although it, too, has frequently carried *novellas* in addition to short stories of "standard" length). Similarly, *Esquire* and *The New Yorker* have managed to publish considerable worthwhile short fiction during recent years. But, as has been remarked earlier, the quantitative fictional decline in the older quality magazines is far greater than the combined story output of these periodicals and other "recent arrivals."

The best explanation of the dearth of artistic, worthwhile short stories lies in the resurgence of another type of writing. The magazine article has come of age, technically and stylistically. Non-fiction writers have outstripped the field in the race for the coveted, limited space available in periodicals. Many of the potentially best short-story writers, if not sleeping, have at least been dozing at the switch. And a few, as already indicated, have been working for another railroad. While somnolent or absent, they have allowed article writers to steal many of the stylistic qualities and techniques which they themselves had developed and perfected. The best magazine articles today are more meaty than short stories and just as entertaining. Story technique, excellent though it has become, has tended to remain static, standardized, whereas article writing has reached new levels, sometimes artistic, sometimes tricky, but consistently appealing.

More and more editors and authors are learning that truth is not only stranger than fiction but that it can be made more entertaining. Thirty or twenty or even ten years ago, much periodical non-fiction was ponderous; "think-pieces" and philosophical essays appeared in polysyllabic and involved dullness. Quality magazines carried them because of their importance and to add "tone," but they relied upon short stories to furnish entertainment and sell copies. Not so today. A glance at the paid advertising of even big-circulation magazines such as *The Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, Liberty,* and some of the women's periodicals, will reveal that fact is more "featured" than fiction in luring prospective purchasers and advertisers. The article writer is in the saddle.

Today's editor knows that readers can flip pages, throw down the magazine, turn on the radio, or go to the movies. He sees to it that his readers are not bored. He recognizes that they have rights, presumably the major part of which is insurance against dullness. The successful article writer, realizing that virtually all readers have an exceptional capacity for resisting information, will delete whole chunks of laboriously acquired data, will "streamline" facts, cover them with



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Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
THREE DIED VARIOUSLY *Guy Elwyn Giles* (Reynal & Hitchcock: $2.)	Stabbing of wealthy recluse with worried kin and shooting of girl artist solved by hot-tempered private 'tec Kent.	Dialog peppery and action incessant. Solution unusual and exceptionally clever. Sleuth and henchmen stoop to anything and stop at nothing.	Prize tough 'un
D AS IN DEAD *Lawrence Treat* (Duell, Sloan & Pearce: $2.)	Attractive young widow dies in arms of psychology-professor sleuth Wayward who scours New Orleans and environs for cold-blooded slayer.	Adventures of Wayward with antagonistic police, arrogant millionaire, high-spirited kids and screwball artists make pungent and galloping yarn.	Satisfying
RED IS FOR KILLING *George Bagby* (Crime Club: $2.)	Fledgling editorial worker on N. Y. weekly news magazine bashed and stabbed in publication's "morgue." Insp. Schmidt dons carpet slippers instanter.	Primarily interesting for hilarious portrayal of temperamental geniuses working under high pressure. Schmitty's handling of case well up to standard.	Diverting
COMPARE THESE DEAD *M. P. Rea* (Crime Club: $2.)	Chicago dept. store exec. poisoned and thrown out of window. Shopper Terry Cavender helps police trail tragic slayer.	Liberal education in way stores snoop on rivals. Plot gets out of control at times. Finale exciting.	Passable

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	1930	1940
American Mercury	13.0%	7.0%
Atlantic Monthly	7.0%	6.4%
Harper's Bazaar	5.7%	3.8%
Harper's Magazine	22.0%	15.0%
Yale Review	16.0%	10.0%
Total	12.7%	8.4%

This table shows the decline in the ratio of fiction to non-fiction in five "quality group" magazines.

chocolate, and present something which may be informative and significant but will certainly be palatable and entertaining.

In all popular and most quality magazines, today's article moves quickly and interestingly because of its "aids to interest," such as dialogue, incidents, characterization, anecdotes, and humor. Some fact writers use even the "flash-back" technique of the short story—beginning with some dramatic scene or incident and proceeding with the article logically and chronologically. They use the tested method of advertising writing: first, get the reader's attention; then arouse his interest; next, make him want to read further; finally, secure a positive reaction to the message presented.

One successful and important article writer always tells students that non-fiction for both quality and popular periodicals must sound like an intelligent conversation at dinner. "Assume," says he, "that your dinner partner has asked a question about some subject which you know pretty thoroughly. You would answer her simply and animatedly, not weigh her down with statistics nor talk like a walking encyclopedia. You would tell her just those things and facts which furnish the clearest possible picture of the subject, and the most authentic, and you would constantly remember that certain matters interesting to you might not appeal to her. Try to write the way you would talk. Don't be stuffy and don't be dull."

That hundreds of writers are following this advice is fully evident. Few non-fiction contributors today assume a pontifical pose, regardless of their authority. And readers are responding to these new attitudes and techniques. It's no longer difficult to read articles. Some intellectually snobbish readers, culture-thirsty, even congratulate themselves upon reading authoritative, meaty articles rather than "just another story."

What is happening is that increasing numbers of magazines are following the lead set twenty years ago by a few foresighted publications. As far back as 1920, and even before, the *Atlantic* was running many warmly human, highly individualistic travel sketches, personal experience articles, and even letters. These contributions, increasingly continued through the years, were essentially factual and yet obviously fictional in appeal. The magazine made no attempt then, as now, to differentiate between story and fact. The *Atlantic,* among others, realized twenty years ago that more important non-fiction is available for printing than significant short fiction. It is also worth noting that two of the three full-length books which the *Atlantic* serialized in 1940 were non-fiction. When unsuccessful attempts were being made to resuscitate *Scribner's* between 1936 and 1939, the editors tried desperately by means of correspondence, personal contacts, and contests to build up not the fiction content of the magazine but the widely popular and genuinely significant "Life in the United States" department. These practices were but straws in the wind, indicating that the important short story was not being produced in numbers, or not being recognized, or not wanted.

TODAY, some editors, many writers, and all "schools of writing" and writer's magazines seem blissfully unaware of what has happened. But the quality story's number is up, at least for the present, and unless something is done to skotch the slide, our ablest story writers are going to find it increasingly difficult to find a market. A few seem to have waked up: within recent months several worthwhile short narratives based upon careful research have appeared. They are so impregnated with facts about army camp life, armaments, or the Gestapo that they seem little different from articles except in the use of hypothetical situations and protagonists. They represent almost a new type—a "factual narrative"—capitulation to the now long-current mania for fact. The method is not entirely new, for *Liberty* experimented with factual narratives ten years ago, without notable success.

The facts seem plain: fewer and fewer short stories, more and more articles are appearing in the quality magazines. More non-fiction books are being serialized. Full-length novels are appearing in space formerly reserved for short stories. Every outstandingly successful magazine started in the past fifteen years has been devoted wholly or mainly to fact. Editors are not cheating readers of their due; important story writers have been overwhelmed by the *Panzer* divisions of an up-to-date army of factual writers.

American reading tastes have radically changed.

LITTLE STORY, WHAT NOW?

(*Continued from page* 5)

ness of their own position: they are asking that writers practise a profound insincerity—and that is an odd thing for moralists to ask. The average man, today, does not go at life with confident faith. He does not believe all is well with the world, nor that providence insures a happy ending to all our human tangles. Is it probable that the writer, more sensitive than the average, can go through today's world clothed in a sense of glory?

The happy-ending story still exists as an avenue of escape for millions. But what kind of escape do we really want our writers to provide? Do we ask only that they provide us with a few moments of forgetfulness? Or do we ask that they, with their peculiar power to go beyond the obvious, so add to our own understanding of the life we live that we can become, because of our companionship with them, better equipped to see with our eyes and hear with our ears?

It seems to me that the short story, today, far from being in a state of decline, is approaching a state where it can rightly mean more than it has ever meant. As it becomes increasingly deft in its power to portray our individual and social complexity, it will offer a veritable treasure house of insight-materials not only to lay readers whose main preoccupation is living with their human fellows but to sociologists and psychologists. At a time when an understanding of human behavior seems the only alternative to racial suicide, we can thank our lucky stars that our short-story writers, with full sincerity, are at the job of trying to understand. If they ask us to face unpleasant realities, that is certainly not more than life itself is asking. And if they work to mature a form that is true to the intricate logic of their psychological materials, we would do ill to complain that their stories

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do not have a traditional array of incidents woven into a close-knit plot.

The short story has enjoyed one rich period of development. It is entering upon another period which, I believe, promises even greater richness, more subtle wisdom and beauty. In a changing world, this new development may be cut short by altered conditions. But if the twentieth-century story has a chance to mature along the lines of its present growth, it will make its own unique place in literary history.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Longfellow: The Day Is Done. (Phoebe Cary)
2. Southey: The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them. (Lewis Carroll)
3. Wordsworth: She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways. (Newton Mackintosh)
4. A. A. Proctor: The Lost Chord. (Anonymous)
5. Tennyson: The Higher Pantheism. (Swinburne)
6. Longfellow: Excelsior. (Anonymous)
7. Thomas Moore: Lalla Rookh. (Anonymous)
8. Charles Wolfe: The Burial of Sir John Moore. (Anonymous)
9. Tennyson: Locksley Hall. (William Aytoun)
10. Dryden: Under Mr. Milton's Picture. (Anonymous)

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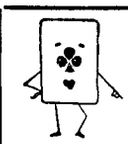

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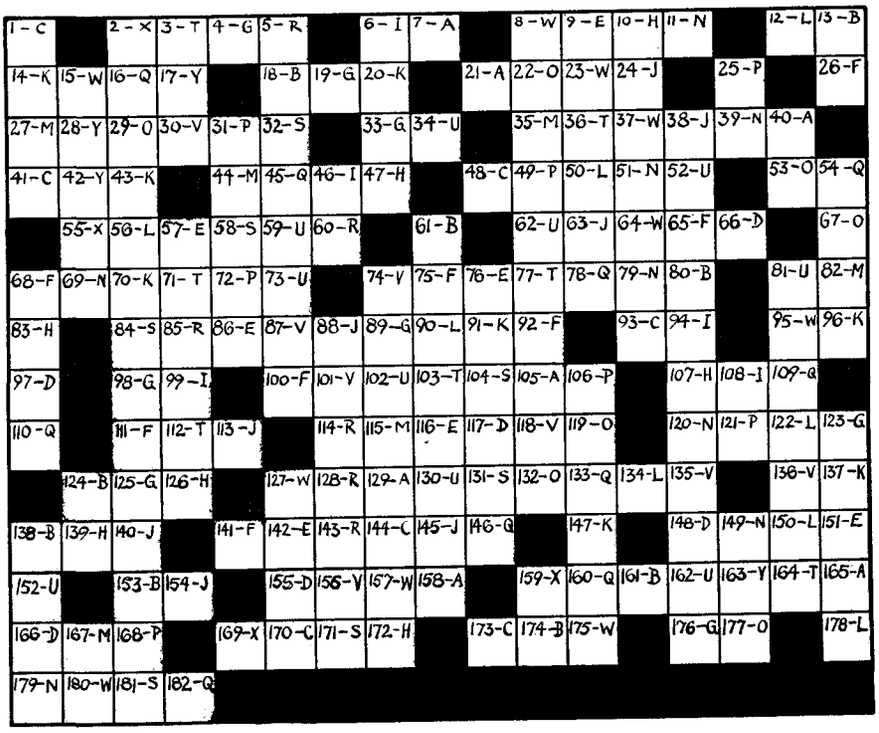
Double-Crostics: No. 400

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY



DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-five words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1938 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 8 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Opera by Massanet based on romance by Goethe.

B. Obscured, darkened.

C. A kind of shepherd's pipe.

D. River in Ireland.

E. A teasing uneasiness.

F. Favorably received.

G. Lunatic (adj.)

H. Patented (Fr.)

I. Novel by Lafcadio Hearn, with Martinique background (1890).

J. A fipple flute.

K. A mask.

L. City in France.

M. Largest island of Japan.

N. Always; during eternity.

O. Decked out; well-attired (slang).

P. Disposition toward activity or work.

Q. Very small, harmless, deer-like mammal of Asia (*tragulus*).

R. Son of Jacob.

S. American critic, novelist, musician, teacher (1879-).

T. Unsteady, shaky.

U. To fail to obtain anything of which one seeks (colloq.; 3 wds.)

V. To use cruelly or improperly (comp.)

W. Home of Sir Walter Scott.

X. Lively dance of the Scottish Highlanders.

Y. *The Hairy Ape* (O'Neill).

WORDS

40 129 21 7 165 158 105

61 153 124 174 80 13 18 138 161

170 41 144 1 48 173 93

117 166 148 155 66 97

116 76 57 142 9 151 86

111 141 26 68 100 65 75 92

98 176 125 19 4 33 89 123

107 126 47 10 139 83 172

99 94 108 46 6

63 88 145 154 140 24 113 38

20 91 137 147 14 96 43 70

90 12 150 122 178 56 134 50

27 115 167 44 35 82

11 69 39 79 120 149 179 51

67 29 53 177 132 22 119

31 49 168 25 106 121 72

16 146 78 160 182 45 109 133 110 54

128 85 143 114 5 60

181 32 171 131 58 84 104

112 3 164 77 36 71 103

152 162 59 62 102 81 73 130 34 52

156 74 87 135 101 118 136 30

23 127 37 15 175 95 8 64 157 180

2 159 169 55

163 28 42 17

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TRADE WINDS

CHARLES P. EVERITT is a grizzled old gentleman who has been selling books on Americana for at least fifty years. And during all those years he has been making notes about the trade and about various observations of eccentric booksellers, collectors, and librarians. At intervals, when his interesting catalogues appear, the inside covers contain excerpts of what he calls "Notes from a Rejected Manuscript." There is something of a "Life With Father" touch in the following reminiscence:

> The first argument—they never quarreled—between father and mother was about the purchase of a book. Father had received a catalogue from a Rochester dealer (George Humphrey, in 1906) listing a mint copy of "Moby Dick" at $7.50. Mother was arguing that it was more important for father to have a new hat. As I discovered later father always compromised his way—incidentally this little book later paid nearly two years of my college life.

We hope that one of these days a bookseller's autobiography will appear and become a best-seller. Books on and by doctors, lawyers, ministers, and war correspondents seem to grip the popular imagination, with Hollywood following along with its own versions. The adventures of an old book-dealer might also prove quite dramatic. Going back to Mr. Everitt, we recall his sensational discovery of an extremely rare Poe item—"The Fall of the House of Usher"—in a crate of dust-covered books purchased for little money. Subsequently, the book was sold for some fabulous fee and became part of book-lore. One of these days some publisher is going to do the trade the honor of issuing the memoirs of an old-timer in the "old and rare" book business. Incidentally, if you happen to come across "Confessions of a Bankrupt Bookseller"—buy it.

★ ★

☞One of the girls who graced our offices for many years, Eileen Murphy, is now the wife of Captain Vincent P. Arkins, of the ill-fated freighter *Lehigh,* which was sunk by a submarine in the South Atlantic last month. But there is a happy ending; Mrs. Arkins writes to let us know that the Captain and twenty-two members of the crew have been rescued and from last reports are heading for these shores.

☞Speaking about the sea, we hear that Alan Villiers is serving in the British Navy and that all goes well with him save that he hasn't time for any writing. Writes Villiers to his publishers: "I was up Murmansk way recently but my work is mostly anti-aircraft and I'm glad of that. The defeat of the aeroplane is the most important thing in this war."

★ ★

☞He was a Rabelaisian figure with a soft flopping hat and some sort of dark cloak that he wore during cold days. He walked the sidewalks of Akron and we cherished his friendship, for he was a lovable man and he wrote with fine precision and thought. Death robbed America of a great writer. Now we note with nostalgia that "The Big Snow," by Jake Falstaff, is coming out through the offices of Houghton Mifflin. It is a book we are going to get and read and give for Christmas. Herman Fetzer, for that was his real name, has contributed much to the art of sensitive writing. And as the Winter snows come tumbling and you're near a log fire rich with hickory smoke be sure to have around you his "Reini Kugel" and "A Book of Rabelais."

★ ★

☞Jake was one of the few columnists who wrote a daily literary column that attracted nation-wide recognition. It appeared in the Akron *Beacon-Journal.* During his Summer vacation he substituted for F.P.A. in the old morning *World,* and all New York paid him homage. To be sure, we are a little partial to Jake, for he published some of our verse when we lived in the Ohio city. But Jake is with us again and it is going to be a genuine homecoming Thanksgiving Week for us.

★ ★

☞Arthur Bell, an old and an honored contributor to these pages, calls our attention to the fact that "The Old Farmer's Almanac" will be 150 years old with the 1942 issue. Mr. Bell, who acted as associate editor of the volume of Nostradamus's prophecies when Little, Brown published it (it is now published by the *Yankee Magazine*), has celebrated its birthday in verse as follows:

OF THE OLD FARMER'S ANNIVERSARY
By the Hired Man

The Farmer, by his Almanac, is seven score and ten;
Throughout his span the Editors, to date, have all been men
In all things conservative. It seems a certain bet
That he will never yield his chair to any Farmerette,
For if some siren, clad in slacks, should ever gain foothold
Her first official act would be to scrap the title, "Old."

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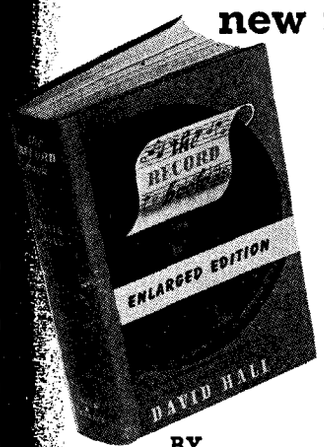

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